
Basileia 'Rwmaiwn *Vasileia Rhōmaïōn*

THE 'CHRISTIAN ROMAN EMPIRE OF THE GREEKS' AT ITS HEIGHT

BASIL II AND AFTER: AN ENCYCLOPAEDIC CHRONOLOGY OF BYZANTIUM, AD 976-1043

by

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List of Roman ('Byzantine') Emperors

976-1025: Basil II (Vasileios), afterwards dubbed 'the Bulgar-Slayer'
1025-28: Constantine VIII Porphyrogenitus
1028-34: Romanus II Argyrus
1034-41: Michael IV 'the Paphlagonian'
1041-42: Michael V 'the Caulker'
1042: (empress regnant) Zoë Porphyrogenita
1042-55: Constantine IX Monomachus

In addition to short yearly entries, this paper contains "mini-articles" of several pages on:

- 'Territory and Population in 1000', after the entry for 997-1000.
- 'The Battle of Kleidion or Belasitsa or Campu-lungu, 1014' (Basil defeats the Bulgarians).
- 'The Sicilian Expedition of 1038', after the entry for 1038.
- 'Land, Local Recruits and Imported Soldiers in Byzantine Italy': also after the entry for 1038
- 'Equipment and Dress in Maniakes' Army, 1038": appendix at the end of this paper.

Introduction: The Mediterranean World in the Late 10th Century

As had been the position for several centuries, Muslim monarchs controlled the southern shore of the Mediterranean and our southern Spain, while Christian kings ruled in the north. The Mediterranean Sea was commonly known in Arab sources as *Bahr al-Rum*, 'the Roman Sea', where Roman means Byzantine.* (Sometimes we have *Bahr al-Rum wa Misr*, 'the Sea of Byzantium and Egypt', as in Qudama, d. 948 [Heck 2002: 109]).

(*) The term *Rum* corresponded to the Byzantine Empire in the earlier Arabic geographical works, while the writers of later geographies began to use the term to define the Christian 'north' in general, including Byzantium.

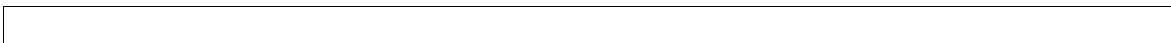
Tracking from east to west, the whole sector from Palestine and Egypt to Algeria was ruled by the self-designated Fatimid Caliph, from an 'Arabo-Berber' Shi'ite line. (The Fatimids established themselves first in what is now Tunisia before capturing Egypt and Jerusalem in 969.) Muslim Sicily was ruled separately by an emir of the Kalbid line, also Shi'ites. The last unconquered Christian ("Byzantine") towns in Sicily were subdued in the 960s, leaving the Strait of Messina the distinct political border between Christendom and Islam (but Christians were still a majority in Sicily especially in the east).

In today's Algeria and Spain, the (Sunni) Muslim rulers were the self-designated Caliphs of the Umayyad line. There were three small Christian realms in the north of what is now Spain: 1 the Kingdom of León, named for the town where its king kept court; 2 the kingdom of Pamplona (the future Navarre); and 3 the 'Gotho-Frankish' County or March of Barcelona, which was a slice of land south of the eastern end of the Pyrenees. (The population of Spain and Portugal was composed variously of Hispano-Romans, Iberians, Basques, Jews and Goths – also Arabs and Berbers in the south.)

Let us now look at the Levant. Eastern Syria and Mesopotamia were divided among three Shi'a Muslim emirates, namely the (Arab) Hamdanid emirate of Mosul; the emir of Diyarbakir (also Hamdanid until 983, then under the Marwanids, a Kurdish line); and Aleppo, also under a Hamdanid ruler. Byzantium ruled western Syria including the large metropolis of Antioch (recaptured from Islam in 969). There was a short Fatimid-Byzantine border south of Antioch.

Old Armenia was divided among several Christian Armenian princes, including those of Taron, Tayk, Kars and Vaspurakan. The region of Dvin, in the north-east of Old Armenia, was from 951 ruled by a Muslim, Kurdish line of emirs, the Shaddadids.

Present-day Georgia was divided between the small Christian Kingdom of Iberia (east) and the small Christian Kingdom of Abasgia (west). King Bagrat II/III, r. 975-1014, will unite all the principalities of eastern and western Georgia into one state. But Tbilisi will remain under Muslim control until around 1050.



The greatest power of the Mediterranean world, stronger than the Fatimids, was the **'Christian Roman Empire of the Greeks'** with its great capital at Constantinople.

Byzantium ruled the whole of Asia Minor but the Balkans were divided between it and the "West Bulgarian state". Eastern Bulgaria has been defeated and annexed in 971. See under 976 in the chronology below.

With the recapture of Crete and Cyprus from Islam in the 960s, the Aegean had once more become a secure Christian lake.

In the west, Byzantium also ruled the toe and heel of Italy (Calabria, Lucania and Apulia). The Dalmatian coast too was dominated by the Empire, in the form of several "Romance" (non-Greek, non-Slavic speaking) coastal towns and islands loyal to Constantinople. The Slavs—Bulgarians, Serbs and Croats—controlled the hinterlands in the NW Balkans.

The western half of southern Italy was divided between the "Lombard" (Latin) principality of Capua-Benevento and the several 'Greco-Roman' port-towns of Salerno, Amalfi, Naples and Gaeta. (Amalfi elected its first duke in 958; until then it had been nominally a vassal of Byzantium.)

Northern Italy was part of the German Empire of the house of Saxony. It had been annexed in 961 by Otto after he had defeated the local "Lombard" king. Thus was created the first *Reich* or German Empire of the Saxons. Crowned by the Pope in 962, Otto affected the title *imperator augustus* ("serene emperor"), somewhat* to the annoyance of the true Roman emperor in Constantinople. (Otto's father had claimed no title higher than king of Germany.) Further west, the Kingdom of Burgundy and the Kingdom of France held parts of the Mediterranean coast.

(*) The Byzantine emperor John (Ioannes) I Tzimisces had recognised Otto's imperial title in 972 and agreed to a marriage between Otto's son and heir Otto II and John's niece Theophanu.



Above: Map of the provinces ("Themes") of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire before the re-capture of Crete, Cyprus, Cilicia and western Syria in the 960s. Eastern Bulgaria too was annexed in the 970s, leaving a rump 'West Bulgarian state' in what is today inland Albania and SE Serbia.

In Italy it is not clear when Byzantium ousted the 'Lombards' of Salerno from Basilicata, the region between Calabria and Apulia: perhaps in 968-69.* There was certainly an imperial 'Theme' (separate province) of "Lucania" in southern Basilicata in the 1030s and 1040s (and perhaps earlier).

(*) Italian Wikipedia 2011, citing Venturino Panebianco, 1980: 'Osservazioni sulla eparchia monastica del Mercurion e sul Thema bizantino di Lucania', *Rivista storica calabrese* a. I (n. 1-2): pp.189-93. Ditto, under 'Storia della Basilicata', citing Adele Cilento, *Bisanzio in Sicilia e nel sud dell'Italia*, Udine, Magnus Edizioni SpA, 2005, p.65.

Ibn Hawqal

Written in 961-88, the *Surat al-'Ard* of the Mesopotamian-born Muslim traveller Ibn Hawqal contains much interesting information on Byzantium and the rest of the Mediterranean world. Among other places, he visited Egypt, Muslim Sicily (AD 973), and Muslim Spain (Andalusia). He wrote of Christian Amalfi but it is unclear whether he actually went there from Sicily.

He mentions the Byzantines coming along the Syrian coasts with warships (*marâkib bahriya*), *shalandis* [Gk *chelandia*: fast, decked war-galleys] and

shinis [longer and larger, slower types] and plundering Muslim ships (D. Aguis in Van Reeth 1998: 91). The Byzantine authorities maintained prisons throughout Anatolia for war-captives held for ransom — he specifies the themes (provinces) of Thrakesion, Opsikion, and Boukellarion. (For a map of the Themes, see after the entries for 1025.)

Trebizond, says Ibn Hawqal, was a key entry-point for goods traded into and out of the empire from and to the Islamic east, including Byzantine textiles and brocades. Goods traded from Byzantium into the east included people: slaves and technical experts such as marble-sculptors; brocades, crystal, fur, Greek *silks*, linen fabric, wools, kitchen utensils, drugs, grain, honey, cheeses raisins, almonds, hazelnuts and walnuts. Goods traded into Byzantium from the east included Syrian textiles, perfumes, dyes, spices, *silks*, papyrus, mules, falcons, precious metals, and precious and semiprecious stones (Heck 2006: 287).

Prosperity Restored

Branko Milanovic has done some interesting work in which he calculates that the Byzantine average income around 1000 AD, after centuries of slow but steady growth, was only about 20 percent lower than in Antiquity - at the time of the Principate - which we may think is pretty good. He proposes that the level of inequality was somewhat higher in the Byzantine empire than in today's United States or Russia but *less* than in today's South Africa or Brazil. —Cf table below, from B. Milanovic, 'An Estimate of Average Income and Inequality in Byzantium around the Year 1000', [*The Review of Income and Wealth*](#), Volume 52, Number 3, September 2006 , pp. 449-470(22). See online at: en.scientificcommons.org/branko_milanovic.

Morrisson and Cheynet, in Laiou 2002: 865, provide evidence regarding various wages. In the 10th century, a *protoasekretes* - a medium-level government official - was paid more than 30 nomismata (= 30 N: gold coins) per year, a notary more than 20 N, a doctor about 9 N, and a servant [i.e. urban household worker] 7.3 N.

They also quote, 2002: 861, the annual *rogai* or emoluments of sailors and soldiers in the year 949. Their cash compensations ranged from the minimum of three nomismata (3 N) for ordinary sailors and soldiers (with no seniority) to 30 N for a *tourmarch*, a rank equivalent to our brigadier or senior colonel. But since in addition soldiers were receiving in-kind rations which are estimated to be worth about 6.5 N per year, this yields the *minimum compensation for ordinary sailors and soldiers of 9.5 N*. Treadgold 1992, cited in Morrisson and Cheynet p. 861, similarly gives money compensation of from 9 N for ordinary soldiers to 144 N for very senior commanders. This was not simply a salary: commanders had to pay their immediate staff out of this amount.

For comparison, the price for an adult Greek male slave in the year 962 was 30 N and the price of an adult Muslim prisoner before the year 1000 was 33-1/3 N . . . But the use of slaves was rare in Byzantium by this time.

Milankovic's sectoral estimates in nomismata per year:

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- Nobility (civil and military): 350 nomismata per year.
[*Senior military commanders 144 N*]
 - Large landowners 25
 - Traders, skilled craftsmen (urban) 18
Urban av. excluding nobility 9.9
 - Army (ranks) 6.5
Total av. 6.22
 - Urban Workers 6
Rural avg 3.91
 - Farmers (smallholders) 3.8
 - Tenants (rural) or *pariokoi* 3.5
 - Urban 'marginals': 3.5 nomismata per year.
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976-1025: BASIL (Vasileios) II

Posthumously nicknamed *Bulgaroctonus* or
Voulgaroktonos, '**the Bulgar-slayer**'.

Son of Romanus II, and co-emperor since 963, *Vasileios* or Basil was aged 18 (others say 20) when he became sole emperor in 976. If born in 957-58, then aged 67 or 68 when he died in 1025. But Psellos and Skylitzes say '70 or 71' when he died, so perhaps born as early as 954.

He had *the longest reign of any Byzantine emperor*. He never married, although he had various love affairs during his pre-ascetic youth (Tradgold 1997: 513).

Treadgold calls him a "cautious and conservative" ruler. He conquered and annexed western Bulgaria and eastern Armenia "almost against his will, as a result of wars he neither started nor wanted" (*Army* p.213). This is true enough; but once the wars were commenced he was implacable.

"[His] eyes were *light-blue* and fiery, the eye-brows not overhanging nor sullen, His whole face was rounded off, as if from the centre into a perfect circle, and joined to the shoulders by a neck that was firm and not too long ... As for height, he was of *less than normal stature**, but it was proportionate to the separate parts of his body, He was not a fluent speaker. ... In fact, he clipped his words, with little pauses between them, more like a peasant than a man of good education. He had a *loud laugh*, which convulsed the whole of his body." - From the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos.

(*) But Psellus describes his brother and successor Constantine as very tall!

*" ... For nobody saw my spear at rest,
from when the Emperor of Heaven called me*

*to the rulership of this great empire on earth,
but I kept vigilant through the whole span of my life
guarding the children of New Rome
marching bravely to the West,
and as far as the very frontiers of the East."*

- From the epitaph on his tomb: *Codice modenese greco* 324, trans. by Stephenson:
<http://homepage.mac.com/paulstephenson/trans/epitaph>; accessed 2005.

976:

1. January: d. John Tzimiskes, aged about 51.

Leo, *Hist.*, X, II, p. 177, describes the circumstances of the emperor's death, but whether he died from poisoning or after a severe illness is not certain. Cedrenus definitely asserts that the Lord Chamberlain, Basil Lecapenus, bribed John's 'cup-bearer' (the Imperial Butler, Gk *pinkernes*) to poison him, but both Psellus and Cedrenus are probably biased in their accounts of Basil. According to Browning 1992: 113, Tzimiskes died probably of typhoid fever.

Basil, aged 18 or "about 20", now assumed adult rule, with his brother Constantine ruling as junior emperor. Policy was largely decided by Basil Lecapenus, the *Parakoimomenos* or chamberlain, who served as the emperor's chief adviser.

Basil the Lord Chamberlain (*parakoimomenus*) was the illegitimate son of Romanus I Lecapenus (919-944) and a eunuch. He had been promoted to his high office by Nicephorus II Phocas, with the additional title of President of the Senate. He afterwards sided with Tzimiskes in the revolt of 969 which ended with the death of Nicephorus. The historians agree that Basil was a man of great energy and ability.

2a. Upper Mesopotamia: The Jazira [N Iraq] frontier, which stretched along the Upper Euphrates and Upper Tigris rivers, was still an area of active hostility between Byzantium and local Muslim powers in 976. Abu Taghlib [Fadl Allah Abu Taghlib al-Ghandanfar] of the (Shi'ite) Hamdanid line was emir of Al-Jazira, the Mosul-Diyarbakir region. See 978.

2b. The East: The first period of a civil war was precipitated in the spring or early summer of 976, when a rebellion was launched by Bardas Sclerus, *doux** of Mesopotamia, the general in charge of the army based east of the Anti-Taurus mountains [present-day SE Turkey]. From his base at Kharput (Hisn Ziyad, Elazig) in the Anzitene plain in Armenia, Sclerus marched westwards. Once he had captured Melitene [Malatya, SSW of Elazig], he declared himself emperor (Holmes, 'Basil II', www.roman-emperors.org/basili). See 977 and 980.

(*) Plural *doukes*. For a discussion of the emergence of new titles and posts such as *doux*, *monostrategos* and *katepan*, see Holmes 2005: 313 ff and 338. Following Tzimiskes's death, the *East-Roman* authorities made Skleros *doux* of Mesopotamia and Bourtzes was named *doux* of

Syrian Antioch. See next.

4. Lebanon: Bourtzes, *doux* of Syrian Antioch, leads a brief invasion of Muslim territory. His forces raided the coastal town of Tripoli and returned to Antioch with considerable plunder (Holmes 2005: 339).

5. The Balkans: *Relocation of the seats of Bulgarian power*. The wandering Bulgarian patriarchate moved from the Danube via Sofia into remoter Macedonia, reaching Lake Prespa* about 976. Samuel ruled at Sofia as deputy to or co-king with his brother, tsar Roman, until after 980. In that year *the lake island of St Achilles on Lake Prespa* (Prespa Fortress) *became Samuel's capital for the next 20 years*. The existing basilica was rededicated to this saint when St Achilles' relics were deposited there in 983. Cf below: revolt of the Cometopouloi, 975-77.

(*) Today Lake Prespa is very close to the intersection point between Greece, FYROM and Albania. Most of the lake and, on its NE shore, the town of Ochrid, lie inside FYROM.

6. NW Greece: First definite mention of the **Vlachs**, a Romance-speaking, non-Slavic people: the future 'Aromanians' of Greece and the "Rumanians" or 'Daco-Romanians' living north of the Danube. *Vlack* is an outside-name or 'exonym',* a Slavonic label that means "stranger", i.e. 'non-Slav'. In the Balkans there were various regions, e.g. parts of Thessaly, dominated by the Vlachs, who presumably had originally migrated there centuries earlier as part of the poorly recorded "Slavic flood" of the 6th and 7th centuries (Heurtley et al. p.46).

The first mention of *Vlachs* in a Byzantine source is about the year 976, when Kedrenos (ii. 439) writes about the murder of the Bulgarian tsar Samuel's brother by certain *Vlachian* wayfarers, at a spot called 'the Fair Oaks', between Kastoria and Prespa. Georgios Kedrinus wrote that the brother of the future Bulgarian emperor Samuel was killed in 976 by '*odites Vlachous*' between Kastoria and the Prespa lakes.

(*) The Vlachs of northern Greece call themselves *Ar'manji*; while the Vlachs or Romanians north of the Danube call themselves *Romani*.

7. Italy: "*Anno 976. obsederunt Sarraceni Gravinam irrito conatu*" (Lupus*): 'The Saracens make a vain attempt to take possession of Gravina [NW of Matera]'.

And "*Anno 977. incenderunt Agareni Civitatem Oriae, et cunctum vulgus in Siciliam deduxerunt*" (Lupus): 'The Muslims ('Agarenes') burn the town of Oria and lead away the whole of its common people to Sicily [as slaves]'. Oria is located inland, at a midpoint between Taranto, Brindisi and Lecce.

Cf 982: Southern expedition by the German emperor.

The Kalbid governor of Sicily was 'Ali b. al-Hasan, called Abu 'l Qasim, 970-982 (Bosworth 2004).

(*) The *Chronicon rerum in regno Neapolitano gestarum*, ascribed

uncertainly to a 'Lupus Protospatharius Barensis', a protospatharius Lupus of Bari.

Self-Defence Refused

Italy: The Life of St Neilos (Nilus) of Rossano, 910-1005, contains the following interesting episode, set in Calabria in the period 965-970. Nilus was abbot of the local monastery of St Adrian near Rossano from about 950 to 980.

[The lord (i.e. imperial governor) of Calabria was a certain Nicephorus*, who demanded that each city [read: major town] should build a ship called a *chelandia* (Gk *chelandion*: war-galley) and *man it* for an attack on Sicily.] . . . "The citizens of Rossano, not tolerating such an imposition, and *unused to the hard service on such ships*, having built theirs and on the point of launching them were overcome with indignation - in which they exceeded all other Calabrians - and leapt onto the ship en masse with blazing brands and loud cackles, burnt the ships and beheaded the captains. . . . " [This caused an outbreak of rebellion and aroused the anger of Nicephorus - the Rossanesi were split whether to continue their rebellion or to appease him with money. A third group, however,] "ran to the undefeated tower, to the holy father Nilus, and pleaded with him to act as mediator . . . [Nicephorus tells the monk that he wasn't going to kill anyone, simply confiscate all their goods.] "Nilus responded, 'But what good will it be to you, Excellency, if in order to collect what is due to the prince [i.e. taxes] you lose your own soul?... Let me write to the emperor...' . . . [Nicephorus says he knows what high regard the emperor has for Nilus, and writing won't be necessary.] "Then, the most holy Father with persuasive and wise words convinced the Master to pardon generously [the destruction of the ships] and the killing [of the captains], with compensation of 500 solidi." —Trans. Patricia Skinner, online 2011 at <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~pes1/docsnilo.html>.

(*) From 965 Nicephorus Hexakionites held a special command as *magistros*** over both Apulia and Calabria (Vera von Falkenhausen, 'Byzantine Italy', in Magdalino 2003: 140; and sources cited by Piergabriele Mancuso, *Shabbatai Donnolo's Sefer Hakhmoni: Introduction, Critical Text, and Annotated English Transpation*, Brill, 2010, note 70, page 20). Lupus reports that he arrived at Bari in "966" (recte 965).

Nicephorus was tasked with aggressively defending Byzantine Italy by invading Muslim Sicily, but this policy was unpopular with the locals because they believed it would invite even more Muslim raids.

(**) The court titles awarded by the emperor were, in descending rank: *proedros* ('president'), *magistros*, *anthypatos* ('proconsul'), *patrikios*, *praipositos* [a rank limited to eunuchs] and *protospatharios* ('first sword bearer'). They were honorific titles, not functional offices; thus a *magistros* was not ipso facto a judge. Theme commanders (military governors of provinces) were commonly awarded the title of *protospatharios*, but a *protospatharios* need not be a military man (see details in ODB: Kazhdan 1991).

970s:

The Balkans: Revolt of the so-called 'Kometopouloi', including Samuel, "the sons of the *komes* [count]", their father being a count named Nicholas.

The revolt in 976 of the Kometopouloi brothers (David, Samuel, Moses and Aaron), and the formation of a new state comprising the first Bulgarian state together with parts of the territory of western Macedonia, incited long-drawn-out bloody conflicts.

The chronology is unclear and it is also disputed whether the revolt encompassed only [Macedonia](#) or took place in north-eastern Bulgaria, eventually to be united with a movement in western Bulgaria. Samuel ruled the area of Ohrid with his brothers, then alone after 987 or 988.

Skylitzes: "Immediately after the death of Emperor Ioannes [John Tzimiskes, d. Jan 976: see there], the Bulgarians rose in revolt and four brothers were chosen to govern them: David, Moses, Aaron and Samuil, sons of one of the all-powerful *comites* [counts] of the Bulgarians and for this reason named Kometopouli ... Of the four brothers, David was immediately killed [see 976] by some Wallachian vagabonds between Castoria, Prespa and the so-called "Fair Oak Wood" [in the area of the the modern Albanian-Greek border]. While besieging Serres, Moses was hit by a stone cast from the wall and died. Aaron was killed by his brother Samuil on July 14 in the place called Razmetanitsa, together with all his kin, because he was a supporter, so they say, of the Byzantines, or because he was trying to seize power for himself. Only his son Vladislav Ivan was saved by Samuil's son Radomir Roman. *Thus Samuil became the absolute ruler of all Bulgaria . . .*" (In truth, if we follow Yahya of Antioch, Samuel was at best deputy tsar under his other brother Roman until 997.)

From c. 976:

The Serbs no longer acknowledged East-Roman overlordship. The Bulgarians dominated the whole NW Balkans so that there was no common Serbian-Greek border except with Byzantine Dalmatia at Ragusa (Dubrovnik). Cf AD 1000.

976-9:

Civil war: Revolt of Bardas Skleros against Basil II. See 977.

The Georgian prince David II of Tao, located between Byzantine Trebizond and Armenian Ani, is best known for his crucial assistance to the Byzantine [Macedonian dynasty](#) in the [976-9](#) civil war and his unique role in the political unification of various Georgian polities as well as his patronage of [Christian](#) culture and learning.

976-1014:

r. Samuel, Bulgarian co-ruler, then tsar, of West Bulgaria. Although not titular tsar until his coronation in 997, he was the driving force of Bulgarian arms from the beginning. See 980.

977:

Civil war in the East: Sclerus finally mustered the strength to cross the Anti-Taurus into the empire. He then encountered and defeated an imperial army in open combat at Lapara on the eastern Anatolian plateau (in Cappadocia). The date of this battle is not known with certainty: either late 976 or early 977. —Holmes, 'Basil II', at *DIR*: <http://www.roman-emperors.org/basilii.htm>; accessed 2011. Cf 979.

Sclerus marched thence to Nicaea, which he besieged. Meanwhile Manuel Curtice [Kourtikios] led the Cibyrrhaeot fleet*, on Sclerus's side, to take the Aegean Islands as a prelude to an attack on the capital. But Basil Lecapenus dispatched the Imperial (central) Fleet under Theodore Carantenus and it crushed the Cibyrrhaeot fleet in the east-central Aegean Sea off Phocaea - NW of Smyrna/Izmir (Skylitzes trans. Wortley p.303; Whittow p.362; Treadgold: *State* p.514).

(*) The maritime Theme (military province) of the Cibyrrhaeots [*Kibyrrhaiotai*], with its seat at Attalia, took in the coast and littoral of SW Asia Minor. It was one of four naval or maritime Themes, each equipped with a fleet and marines, the other three being 'Samos': covering the south Aegean Sea]; the 'Aegean': covering the north Aegean; and 'Hellas': the west Aegean (Treadgold, *Army* p.208). The central ("Imperial") fleet at Constantinople was bigger than all four combined.

978:

1. Emperor Basil aged 20+ ...

2. Civil war: In the spring of 978 the de facto regent Basil Lecapenus the *Parakoimomenos* (the 'Nearby-Sleeper' or imperial chamberlain) recalled Bardas Phocas, the nephew of the late emperor Nicephorus II Phocas, from internal exile. To lead the response to Sclerus's rebels, Phocas was appointed Domesticus of the Scholai [Gk *domestikos ton skholon*], head of the imperial field army. He headed for Caesarea in Cappadocia where he raised an army which included those, like Michael Burtzes, whose precise loyalties during the early years of the revolt had been uncertain (Holmes loc. cit.).

(Holmes:) *Bardas vs Bardas*: The first battle between the loyalists under Phocas and the rebels under Sclerus was fought at Pankaleia close to Amorium on the western reaches of the plateau in June of 978; the second at Basilica Therma in the eastern Anatolian theme of Charsianon in March 979. See more below.

2. 'Kievan Rus': Vladimir I Svyatoslavich becomes ruler of 'Russo-Varangian' Kiev* (or 980). See 988. At his accession he put up six wooden statues of the pagan gods in Kiev and supposedly *sacrificed 1,000 victims* in public (by throttling or hanging). At any rate, the sources mention human sacrifice (A P Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*, 1970 p.254).

As a later chronicle states, "they brought to them sacrifices, acclaiming them as gods, and they brought to them their own sons and daughters, and these sacrifices went to the devils. ... Both the Russian land and this hill were defiled with blood" (quoted by Nora Chadwick 1977, *The beginnings of Russian history: an enquiry into sources*).

(*) In the 9th century, Kiev, a Slavic settlement, was captured by the 'Varangians' (Scandinavians, 'Vikings') and in 864 it became the capital of Rus'. The kingdom of the Kievan Rus' was officially founded by Prince Oleg (Helgu in Khazarian records) about 880. The new Kievan state prospered because it had an abundant supply of furs, beeswax and honey for export and because it controlled three main trade routes of Eastern Europe: the Volga trade route from the Baltic Sea to the Orient, the Dnieper trade route from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and Constantinople, and the trade route from the Khazars of Transcaucasia to the Germans. *The Scandinavians gradually intermarried and merged with the Slavic population* — the third known ruler of Rus', Sviatoslav I, d.972, already has a Slavic name.

There is a tradition that the (upper) Volga Bulgars, who were Muslims, offered him instruction in Islam; but eventually (late 980s) he would choose East-Roman-style Christianity. This was still in the future.

Upper Mesopotamia: Muslim-ruled Edessa was very much a Christian-dominated town: Ibn Hawqal, AD 978, estimates the number of churches in the city at more than 300, and the traveller al-Muqaddasi (AD 985) describes its cathedral, with vaulted ceiling covered with mosaics, as *one of the four wonders of the world* (1911 edn of the *Britannica* under 'Edessa').

978-79:

1. Civil War, Sclerus vs Phocas:

"Yahya alludes to . . . two battles: the first at Pankaleia on 19 June 978, which Sclerus won; the second at an unknown location on 24 March 979, where Phocas was victorious. . . . this confusion [between the two battles] can be reconciled by using evidence from Leo the Deacon, the Life of John and Euthymios, and an inscription from the Georgian monastery of Zarzma. The most plausible resolution is that the first battle was fought at Pankaleia [Pancalia] close to Amorium on the western reaches of the plateau in June of 978; the second at Basilica Therma in the eastern Anatolian theme of Charsianon [east of Ankara] in March 979" (Holmes, loc. cit.). See more below.

2. Byzantine Armenia: David of Tao's regional prominence [in Armenia] grew particularly strong during the Sclerus and Phocas revolts. In 978/9 he supplied Basil II with reinforcements in the struggle against Sclerus. His reward was the lifetime stewardship of key imperial territories, including the town of Theodosiopolis [Erzerum] and the plain of Basean (Holmes).

3. End of the Hamdanid emirate of Mosul: When the Buyid emir of Baghdad, Adud ad Daula, expelled Sclerus's regional ally Abu Taghlib from Mosul, Mayafariqin and Amida in 978-9, the empire found itself faced (briefly) by a potent new foe. Cf 979 and 980.

In 989 the Buyids will be forced out of Mosul by an alliance of the Hamdanids and 'Uqailids. Once the town was taken, the latter turned on the

former and ruled Mosul in their own right (from 990). Power shifted between the Uqailids and Buyids thereafter, mostly in favour of the former.

978-1015:

Reign of the Kievan Rus prince Vladimir. He was preoccupied by the threat from the Pechenegs, a Turkic people who occupied the Ukrainian steppes.

If Vladimir had wanted to challenge Byzantium he would have had to fight the Pechenegs for access to the Black Sea and the lower Danube. To make the same point another way: the rump of eastern Bulgaria was wedged between the pagan Pechenegs and Bulgaria's ancient foe Byzantium. Cf 1001: Basil's attack on Serdica.

979: ITALY: MIDPOINT OF THE LAST PERIOD OF BYZANTINE RULE IN APULIA AND BARI. See 982-83.

Southern Italy in 979

After the map in Kreutz.

(a) Byzantium ruled about half the entire southern sector of Italian peninsula, namely - in today's terms - nearly all of Apulia, probably* Basilicata, and Calabria.

(*) It is not clear when Byzantium ousted Salerno from Basilicata, the region between Calabria and Apulia: perhaps in 968-69 if we follow the Italian Wikipedia, 'Lucania', 2011, citing Panebianco, Venturino, 1980: 'Osservazioni sulla eparchia monastica del Mercurion e sul Thema bizantino di Lucania', *Rivista storica calabrese* a. I (n. 1-2): pp.189-93. Loud, 'Southern Italy', in NCMH III: 632, likewise favours the 960s. In any event there was definitely an imperial 'Theme' or province of "Lucania" in southern Basilicata by 1031.

In N Apulia, the Byzantines held some land beyond the Ofanto River including Bovino. Capua-Benevento controlled Siponto, Lucera and Ascoli. See 982-83: Lucera and Ascoli are taken by Byzantium.

In the first pan-Italian census of 1861, when wheat was still harvested by hand, Puglia/Apulia had a population of 1,335,000; and Basilicata 509,000 [at <http://dawinci.istat.it/dawinci>]. Thus in Byzantine times we might hazard 600,000 there (one-third of the 1861 figure), with another 300,000 in heavily forested Calabria - total perhaps 900,000. For comparison, Stathakopoulos 2008 offers conservative figures for a population density, empire-wide, in the whole Byzantine millennium of nine people per km² in tough times, rising to 15 per km² in fair to good times. The combined area of Puglia [19,336 sq km], half of Basilicata [4,998] and all of Calabria [15,079] is 39,413 sq km. Using Stathakopoulos' guesstimate, Byzantine Longobardia would have contained fewer than 590,000 people.

b. The next largest realm was Capua-Benevento, which extended across the peninsula from the western coast near Capua to the Gargano promontory on

the east coast.

c. Third was Salerno, which dominated the southern half of Campania and adjoined Byzantine Calabria. Salerno's coastal holdings separated Naples from Amalfi.

d. Fourth was the small duchy of Naples, which ruled only a section of the coast on the Bay of Naples.

e. Last was tiny Amalfi, which consisted of a coastal strip on the south side of the Sorrento promontory.

Around 977, the Baghdadi merchant Ibn Hawqal described Amalfi as "one of the most prosperous and beautiful of the cities that enjoy the best conditions and are distinguished by their wealth and opulence". He even deemed the ancient and nearby town of Naples "inferior to Amalfi for many reasons"; "a beautiful city, but less important than Amalfi". Its traders ventured even as far as Egypt.

979:

(Or 978:) Civil war in Anatolia: Sclerus' army confronts Phocas's army at Pancalia, near Amorium. As we have said, modern historians date Pancalia, won by Skleros, to 19 June 978, and Basilica Therma in the eastern Theme of Charsianon, won by Phocas, to 24 March 979 (Treadgold 1997: 515).

Psellos writes thus about the latter: "Each side was confident in face of its foes, and the two leaders, by common consent, decided to engage in single combat. So, riding out to the space that divided the two lines of battle, they spied one another and without more ado came to close quarters. The rebel Sclerus, unable to curb his natural impetuosity, broke the rules of this kind of fighting, and as he approached Phocas struck him with all his might *on the head*. The blow gained additional power because it was delivered on the charge. Phocas, dumbfounded at the unexpectedness of this stroke, momentarily lost control of his reins, but collecting his wits again, he returned the blow, on the same part of his adversary's body. The latter thereupon lost interest in the combat and rode away in flight."— This single combat took place at Pancalia.

On 24 [March 979](#) the two leaders clashed in single combat, with Sklerus cutting the right ear of Phocas' horse *with his lance* before sustaining a grave wound in the head. Thus the victory was won by Phocas, and Sklerus fled into Muslim territory: first to the Hamdanid court at Mosul, then to the Buyid court at Baghdad (Jenkins p.304).

fl. Maslama *al-Madjriti* ("of Madrid"), Andalusian scholar at Cordoba. He translated Ptolemy's *Planisphere* into Arabic, and calibrated al-Khwarizmi's astronomical tables to the meridian of Cordoba.

980:

West Bulgarian kingdom: With his capital at Serdica—modern Sofia—Samuel titles himself King [*tsar*] of the Bulgarians, and begins regular invasions of present-day northern Greece (Thessaly). Others say he was not formally tsar

until 997 (Stephenson 2003: 18). Samuel already controlled most of the West Balkans; the old heartland of (eastern) Bulgaria was now divided half between the Bulgarians and Byzantium. See 986.

The autonomous Bulgarian church was headed by a patriarch with his seat (eventually) at Ochrid in what is now western FYROM. The Patriarch of the Bulgarians, called Gabriel or Germanus, was established first in Serdica/Sofia (about 980), and later moved south to Vodena [Edessa* in today's Greek Macedonia], and thence to Moglena [near Edessa] and Prespa and finally nearby Ohrid* by about 990 (Curta 2006: 241). These peregrinations probably coincided with the movements of Samuel's court. See 1014-18.

(*) Ohrid and Edessa were linked by the ancient Roman highway called the Via Egnatia.

Iranian forms: At Baghdad the Buyid ruler 'Adud al-Dawla restores the ancient Sassanid styles: the title *shahanshah* ("emperor"); the *taj* (domed) crown; and inscriptions in Pahlavi (Persian) rather than Arabic.

980-88:

Competing charismas: The new Kievan-Rus prince Vladimir compares the claims of Judaism, Christianity and Islam against those of paganism. Coming to the throne in c.978, Vladimir was the first Russian prince to mint his own coins. Cf 987.

981:

1. Italy: The future St Nilus of Rossano, aged about 70, was the abbot of St. Adrian's monastery at Acri between Rossano and Cosenza in Calabria. When *the Saracens invaded the area c. 981*, he led the community out of the empire to Latin Italy, specifically to Velluccio [Valleluce], near Monte Cassino, where they would live for 15 years on land given them by the monks of Monte Cassino. Ironically Nilus had left the Mercurion (the far north of Calabria) in the 940s or later and returned to central Calabria to establish St Adrian's as being relatively safe from the Saracen raids of that time. — Kleinhenz et al., eds, *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia* 2004, p.771.

2. Syria: Bardas Phocas campaigns against Aleppo and forces its emir, Saad al-Daula, to resume paying tribute. See 983.

One of the Buyid (Iranian) envoys who travelled to Constantinople, Ibn Shahram, left an invaluable account of his own expedition to Constantinople c.981. Shahram indicates that Basil wanted to surrender the empire's client state of Aleppo in northern Syria in return for Sclerus.

Hocker, in Gardiner 2004, notes that the wars in the East lacked a naval component until 998, suggesting that the Byzantine fleet was dedicated to duty in home waters, against the Bulgarians and usurpers (and perhaps also because of the *weakness of the Fatimid navy*).

Spain, 981: The small Christian state of Leon acknowledges the suzerainty of Al-Mansur, ruler of Cordoba. The next few decades will see the very apogee of Muslim power in Iberia.

982: The Norwegian adventurer Eric 'the Red' re-discovers Greenland. Other Norsemen had seen it before; Eric's band were the first permanent European settlers.

A Persian Description of the Empire of *Rum*

From the *Hudud al-'Alam* or "The Regions of the World", an anonymous Persian geography text dating to c.982:

" . . . [the] provinces which lie eastwards of the straits of Constantinople, they bear the following names: a. Thrakesion (spelt: *Braqess*); b. Opsikion (spelt: *Absyq*); c. Optimaton (spelt: *Afim*); d. Seleukia or *Saliqiya*; e. Anatolikon [west of Cappadocia] (*Naliq*); f. Buccellarion (spelt: *Buqelar*); g. Paphlagonia (*Aflakhoniya*); h. Cappadocia/Kappadokia or 'Kabadhak': *Qabadhaq*; i. Charsianon (*Kharshana?*); j. Armeniakon in NE Asia Minor (*Arminyq*); and k. Chaldia (*Khaldiya*). Each of these provinces (themes) is vast and has numerous towns, villages, castles, fortresses, mountains, running waters and amenities. In each of these provinces lives a commander-in-chief (*siphsallr*) on behalf of the **king of Rum** (*azn-i malik al-Rum*, i.e. Emperor), with numerous troops numbering from 3,000 men to 6,000 horse [sic] and (destined) to guard the province (*mar nigh dshtan-i niyat r*) (online at www.kroraina.com/hudud/hud_42.html).

For comparison, the Arab author Qudama, writing in about AD 930, had said the number of troops (foot and horse) varied from 15,000 in Anatolicon or *Naliq* to 4,000 in Kharshana, Cappadocia and Khaldia.

982-3:

1. Italy: Having adopted the style *Romanorum imperator augustus* or 'holy emperor of the Romans' in 982, the German king Otto II - husband to Theophano, John Tzimiskes' niece - invades (982) the Taranto sector of East-Romanic Apulia. This was presented as a move against the Saracens on behalf of all Christians

The Byzantine authorities vested a certain *patrikios* Romanos with broad authority over Byzantine Italy and Calabria, but he did not proceed against Otto, preferring (or being ordered) to remain in Bari. He was succeeded by Kalokyros Delphinas, *katepanos* or governor-general 982-83.

"Anno 982. tradita est Civitas Bari in manus Chalochyri Patritij, (b)qui et Delfina à duobus fratribus Sergio, et Theophilacto mense Iunij xj. Die; et Otho Rex obiit Romae". - 'The town of Bari is turned over into the hand of [delivered to] the patrikios Kalokyros called Delphinas, by the two brothers Sergius and Theophylact on 11 June; and king Otto of Rome dies' [actually in 983: see there]. —Lupus.

Otto's Southern Italian Campaign, 982

From Salerno, Otto proceeds south-east into Byzantine Apulia, to Matera and Taranto by March 982. Oddly, it seems he simply camped on the outskirts of these walled towns, probably because they were seen as impregnable (Kreutz p.122). One must imagine that he had brought no siege equipment or was

not interested in capturing them.

Hearing that the emir of Sicily, *Abu al-Qasim* (rendered in Lupus as *Bulcassimus*), was crossing to Byzantine Calabria, or had already landed, Otto next proceeds there with his Italo-Lombard allies. He established a base camp at Rossano, where he left his wife, treasure and other baggage. Continuing on he eventually reached Columna Regia/Colonna Reggina [modern Villa San Giovanni] near Reggio, traditionally regarded since Antiquity as the point on the coast closest to Sicily (Dirk Alvermann, 'La battaglia di Ottone II contro i Saraceni nel 982', *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 62 (1995), 115-30). It is not clear whether the battle with the Saracens was fought near Capo Colonne near Rossano or later at Colonna Reggina.

It is commonly said that the Italo-German forces came up with the Saracens near Capo Colonne, not far from Cotrone and Stilo, on the sole of the "front foot" of Italy ('Schlacht am Kap Colonna', http://lexikon.freenet.de/Schlacht_bei_Cotrone). Others say this was near Colonna Reggina itself (Alvermann loc. cit.). Wherever it was, Otto's army was defeated, or at least severely mauled, on 15 July 982 by a Sicilian Saracen (Fatimid-Kalbid) force temporarily allied (according to some) to Byzantium. Some contemporary local sources did not count it as a Saracen victory, and quite possibly the Muslims suffered nearly as badly as the Germans and Italians.

Both armies were probably large, as on the German-Italian side Otto was accompanied by nearly every important German bishop and noble (Kreutz p.123). The emperor narrowly escaped, while *the Sicilian emir died*. According to the Muslim historian Ibn al-Athir, casualties on the Christian side were around 4,000. Landulf IV of Benevento, Henry the Bishop of Augsburg, Günther the Margrave of Merseburg, the Abbot of Fulda and numerous other German counts were among them.

Otto escaped from being killed or captured after the battle by riding to the coast, where he managed to get taken on board a passing Byzantine merchant ship heading east (where possible, galleys always travelled in sight of the coast and landed each night). In return for an offer of gold, the ship took him to the German base-camp at Rossano where his wife was waiting. He avoided having to pay by leaping off the ship as it dropped anchor at Rossano.

Then Otto retires (Jan 983) to Rome, where, having earlier contracted **malaria**, he dies (7 Dec 983), aged just 28. Cf 1019.

This battle resulted in the final surrender of all of Apulia and Calabria to Byzantium and destroyed the prestige of German authority throughout Italy (*Cath. Encyc.*, under 'Otto II', www.newadvent.org/cathen/11355a).

Holmes: "It was ostensibly to deal with [the] Arab threat that the German emperor Otto II invaded Byzantine southern Italy in 982. *The Byzantines neither supported nor opposed this invasion*. When Otto was eventually defeated it was by the emir of Sicily at Stilo in Byzantine Calabria."

Otto, "going after them [the Muslim Sicilians] as quickly as he could, found

his enemy entrenched at Capo Colonne near Crotone [on the sole of the front foot of Italy], and attacked him on July 15. German horsemen broke through the Saracen centre and found al-Qasim [Abul Kasim], *the emir of Sicily, whom they killed*. Victory seemed certain; the Germans began to pursue the fleeing Arabs. However, important Saracen reserves had been positioned in the nearby hills. These now sallied forth and fell on the careless and unsuspecting Germans, many of whom were killed, among them several great nobles. *Otto himself fled* with some retainers to the beach, with the Saracens on his heels." – Fontaine, 'The Light & the Dark: Vademecum: The Saxon Era', at <http://home.wanadoo.nl/piet.fontaine/volumes/saxons.htm>; accessed 2005.

As Bachrach describes it, the Muslims used a variation of the feigned retreat against Otto II's army at [near] Capo Colonne in 982. "The Muslims", he writes, "coordinated [a feigned retreat] with a hidden reserve and a flank attack. The Muslim light horse made preparations *as if* they would engage a force of German heavy horse in hand-to-hand combat; however, just before the armies made contact, Abul Kasim's men wheeled their mounts and began a headlong retreat. Otto's troops followed in hot pursuit. Several miles down the road, however, Abul Kasim had stationed a reserve of mounted troops hidden by the terrain, and when the Germans passed by, the Muslims struck their flank. *The main body of Muslim horse then abruptly wheeled, formed up, and counterattacked*. The Germans, who had *broken their formation* in order to carry out the pursuit—Einhard had earlier on remarked how it was normal practice for mounted troops to pursue a fleeing enemy in an individual manner—not only were surprised by the enemy reserve but were attacked on the flank and at the front at virtually the same time. Thus it should not be much of a surprise to learn that Otto's forces were all but annihilated." —Bernard S. Bachrach, in Howell Chickering and Thomas H. Seiler, eds., *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988. Online at <http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/articles/bachrach3.htm>; accessed 2006.

2. Italy: Taking advantage of the distraction caused by the Saracen-German clash, the new catepan* (Byzantine regional governor) Kalokyros Delphinas extended *East-Roman* territory to northern Apulia, namely to include Ascoli and Lucera; and later Lesina (Stephenson in Madgdalino 2003: 143; Holmes 2005: 507).

(*) Greek *ho Kat'epano*, "the one above (the others)", "the topmost": supreme governor or commander-in-chief. *Ho*, 'who, he, the' + *kata*, 'from' + *epano*, 'above'.

982-83:

Emir of Sicily: Jahir b. 'Ali al-Kalbi, son of Abu-I-Qasim (Bosworth 2004).

Catepans of Italy: a. Calocyros Delphinas patrikios, AD 982 et 983. b. Romanos patrikios, arrived AD 985. c. Sergius "Protospata[rius]"*, AD 987-89, *a Barentibus occisus* (Lupus: "killed by the men of Bari") is not described as

catepan but may have held the post.

(*) Like patrikios, protospatharios was a high court title; not an office or post. The ODB: Kazhdan 1991 places patrikios above protospatharios. According to Bury, however, citing the late ninth-century *Kleterologion* of Philotheos, the rank of patrikios was inferior to that of protospatharios. Cf. J.B. Bury, 'The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century', *The British Academy Supplemental Papers* 1, London: OUP 1911, p.22.

983:

1. Syria: Bardas Phocas counters a Fatimid (Egyptian) threat to Aleppo. Aleppo was the buffer state between Byzantium and the Fatimid realms. See 995.

The Fatimids were a militant Shia dynasty originally from the Maghreb; they possessed both a powerful land army composed originally of Berber forces and also by this time a large fleet (Holmes 2005: 306).

2. N Mesopotamia: With the advance of the Fatimids, *Abbasid rule in the Levant collapsed*. In Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, independent emirates were established at Aleppo, Diyarbakir and Mosul.

The Kurdish chief Badh took formerly Abbasid Mayyafarikin, a town to the north-east of Diyarbakir (Amida). This was ancient *Martyropolis*, today's Silvan: on the ancient highway that ran from Amida to Lake Van. He took also Amida, Akhlat (Khliat) and Nisibis (Singh p.479). Which is to say: all the basin of the upper Tigris River SW of Lake Van.

After 983:

The weakening of Buyid rule in Baghdad meant that for the first time since the seventh century there was no great power sitting beyond Armenia and the Transcaucasus. The Romanics will be faced by only a string of relatively small and weak emirates. *This opened up opportunities for Byzantium to operate fairly freely in the West. But this opportunity will be squandered in civil war.*

983-85:

The Kalbid governor of Sicily was Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Ali.

983-90:

N. Mesopotamia: Badh [Abu Shuja' Badh bin Dustak], first of the Marwanids.

He founded the Kurdish emirate of Mayyafariqin, and conquered Diyarbakir (ancient Amida, Kurdish Amed), as well as a variety of villages on the northern shores of Lake Van in Armenia. During the Phocas revolt, Badh took advantage of the mayhem inside Byzantium to raid the plain of Mus in Taron, an Armenian principedom that Byzantium had annexed in 966.

Exotic Eastern Customs

Bathing, and eating with forks -

At times even civilised practices introduced to the West from the Greek East

were condemned as sinful. For instance, the East-Roman princess Theophanu, wife of Otto II, d. 983, and regent for her son Otto III, 983-1002, one of the ablest empresses ever to reign in Germany, was seen after her death by a visionary Western nun to be burning in Hell because of her habit of taking baths.^{*} The early death of Theophanu's cousin Maria Argyra, the wife of the Doge of Venice, was similarly considered by Peter Damian to deserve divine punishment because Maria had introduced the use of forks to Venetian dining tables! —Steven Runciman, 'Byzantium and the Renaissance', *The University of Arizona Bulletin*, (1970), 506. There is an illustration of a two-pronged Byzantine fork in Herrin 2007: plate 12.

In 10th century Constantinople, one young well-born woman is known to have made *weekly* visits to the baths for the express purpose of maintaining cleanliness and beauty (Rautman p. 47). It seems implied that most of the city bathed much less often.

(*) The attitudes of moralists should not be confused with what people actually do: bathing was not uncommon in the West. Georges Duby, in an article in *A History of Private Life*, has proposed that "... among the dominant class at least, cleanliness was much prized. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Cluniac monasteries and houses of the lay nobility continued to set aside space for baths...". And (albeit we are in the Crusade era) "a crier patrolled the streets of 13th century Paris to summon people to the heated steam-baths and bath-houses. These establishments, already numbering 26 in 1292 [according to Riolan, *Curieuses Recherches*], and with their guild, were a familiar feature of the town. They were commonplace enough for it not to be shocking to offer a session in a steam-bath as a tip to artisans, domestic servants, or day-labourers." —Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing attitudes in France since the middle ages*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 21-22.

983-5/6: Emir of Sicily: Dja'far or Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Kalbi (983-985).

984:

Italy: The leaders of Bari, Sergius and his brother Theophylact, give Bari back to the catepan Calocyros who also retakes Ascoli Satriano, near Foggia. The brothers were awarded the high court title of *protospatharius*. —Von Falkenhausen, in Magdalino ed., *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, Brill p.146.

983-1001:

David 'the Curoplate', Georgian prince of Iberia, took and held his throne with Byzantine aid.

Iberia, our central Georgia, lay between the kingdom of Abasgia, Byzantium, and various Armenian principalities.

985:

Basil II removes the de facto ruler Basil Lekapenos, the *parakoimomenos*, 'the one who sleeps nearby', or Grand Chamberlain. Lekapenos had served successive emperors for some 40 years. Basil, aged 27, and Constantine VIII,

aged 25, now **reign alone**.

"There were rumours that Basil Lecapenus [the Parakoimomenos] was about to incite a palace coup against his great-nephew. Next the armies of the East suspended their operations against the Fatimids in northern Syria. But their expectations of a change of regime proved premature. Rather than removing Basil, the Parakoimomenos found himself dislodged from power (985). The emperor then reorganised the military high command in the east, recalling Leo Melissenus, dux of Antioch, and replacing him with Bardas Phocas, who was transferred from the office of Domesticus of the East. Meanwhile, Basil took control of 'foreign policy' by attacking Bulgaria in August 986. When this initiative collapsed in ignominious defeat, a second period of civil war ensued." – Holmes, website loc. cit.

Central Asia: The Seljug Turks, a ruling tribe of the Oghuz, move to the vicinity of Bukhara.

c. 985: fl. Firdawsi or Ferdowsi Tousi, the great epic poet of Persia, author of the Book of Kings, *Shah-nama*, completed in 1010. The *Shahnama* has 62 stories, 990 chapters, and contains 60,000 rhyming couplets, making it more than seven times the length of Homer's Iliad.

The *Shahnama* or "The Epic of Kings", to which he devoted most of his adult life, was originally composed for eventual presentation to the Samanid princes of Khorasan. They were the chief instigators of the revival of Iranian cultural traditions after the Arab conquest of the seventh century.

Following the collapse of the Abbasid caliphate, Persia at this time was divided between the Buyids (west) and the Saminids (east), the latter emirate falling to Mahmud of Ghazni after 998: the *Shah-nama* is dedicated to him; but Firdawsi would later satirise Mahmud. Cf 1376.

From 985:

1. *High point of Muslim power in Spain/al-Andalus*: al-Mansur or Almanzor achieves regular victories against the Christians of northern Spain. In 997 he conquers the holy shrine of Santiago de Compostela and takes its bells as loot.

2. The Western Maghrib is incorporated into the Fatimid empire.

985-89:

The Kalbid governor of Sicily was Abdallah b. Muhammad b. Ali.

986:

1. The West Balkans: Ill-fated first campaign of Basil II against Samuel's 'West Bulgarians', who have secured control of much of the north-western Balkans centred on their new capital of Prespa near Ohrid in the modern-day FYROM: Republic of "Macedonia".

Basil advances against the Bulgarian town of Serdica (Sofia) but fails to take it. He then leads the army back towards Constantinople. Meanwhile (or later) Samuel takes Larissa in present-day central Greece, and then

ambushes Basil's army in NW Thrace: *major Imperial defeat*.

Lower Thessaly now passes from the empire to Bulgarians, who thus establish a toehold on the Aegean.

The chronology is unclear, as Kazhdan and Brand explain. Possibly in ca.981 Samuel had invaded Greece, then (between 982 and 986) Thessaly, where he seized Larissa. Exploiting Basil II's involvement in the struggle with Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas, Samuel expanded his realm. *The peak of his success was his victory over Basil at Trajan's Gate*. —A. Kazhdan, C.M. Brand, in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (1991), vol.3, p.1838.

Basil lifted the siege of Sofia and headed back for [Thrace](#) but fell into an ambush and suffered a serious defeat at Trajan's Gate which is today's Succu Pass, the mountain pass between Sofia/Serdica and Plovdiv/Philippopolis, on [17 August 986](#). Leo Diaconus was present; he barely escaped alive (Leo, *History* X:8; Jenkins 1987: 314).

Western Serbia also came under Bulgarian domination. And by 988 the Bulgarians will penetrate east toward the Black Sea, regaining much of old Bulgaria. In the south, following the capture of Larissa, (as we have said) a Bulgarian toehold is established on the Aegean coast that cuts East-Roman Hellas off from Thessaloniki. Cf 990 and 995.

Samuel's capitals were successively Serdica (Sofia) (before 986), then Prespa, near Ohrid. A great fortress was built at Ohrid around this time. Cf 986-90 below.

Scientific Warfare

Leo Diaconus took part in the war against the Bulgarians under the Emperor Basil II, was present at the siege of Triaditza (Sofia), where the imperial army was defeated, and barely escaped with his life. He attended the emperor as his deacon; hence the sobriquet "Diaconus".

Catherine Holmes writes thus: "Leo the Deacon was an eye-witness on the 986 expedition. He . . . consistently indicates that the campaign failed because the Byzantines were *incompetent, complacent, and lacked supplies*. The Byzantines were not simply routed as they returned home, but subjected to *constant raids throughout the campaign*. This logistical interpretation is supported by [the chronicler] Stephen of Taron and by a contemporary military manual. This military handbook, devoted to Byzantine warfare in the Balkans, dwells on how military success can be achieved in a Balkan context. It stresses the need for a strong camp [surrounded by a ditch and palisade], regular supplies, and adequate defence in the passes. So close are the parallels between these recommendations and Leo's diagnosis of defeat, that it has been suggested that this manual was composed in response to the disaster of 986, and that it was used as a handbook for Basil's subsequent campaigns in Bulgaria" (Holmes, 'Basil II', at www.roman-emperors.org/basilii; also Leo, trans Talbot & Sullivan 2005: 10, 41.)

2. Civil war 986-89: Revolt of Bardas Phocas against Basil II; the latter makes

an alliance with Vladimir of Kiev. Cf 987, 988.

3. Renegade East-Romans aid the Arabs: "A foreign war", writes Psellos, "surprised the Babylonian, that same king Chosroes [sic: meaning the Buyid ruler of Baghdad] to whom Sclerus and his army had fled and from whom they had hoped for assistance. Those hopes, as I have said, had already been dashed. Well, this war proved to be a terrible strain on the king's resources and great numbers of armed men were involved in the struggle. It was impossible for Chosroes to feel any confidence in his own native forces without foreign aid. So *he turned for help to the exiled Romans* [i.e. Sclerus and his men]. They were at once released from their bonds, brought out of their prisons, strongly armed and set in battle-array against his enemies [around Melitene: see below]. They (*Sclerus and his men*), being virile and warlike soldiers, acquainted with the disposition of infantry in battle, arranged themselves in two groups, one on either flank. Then, charging on horseback in mass-formation and shouting their war-cry, they killed some of the enemy there on the spot and others they put to flight. The pursuit continued as far as the earthworks and the foe was completely annihilated." See 987 below.

4. Italy: Sicilian Muslims briefly occupied Gerace [med. *Chiriachus*] and Bovalino in Byzantine Calabria (986), and, further north, the walls of Cosenza were destroyed (986 or 987); and there were attacks on Bari (988) and Taranto (991) (Kreutz p.123; Holmes' book 2005: 437; also Holmes, 'Basil II', at www.roman-emperors.org/basilii: accessed 2011).

"*Anno 986. comprehenderunt Sarraceni Sanctam Chiriachi Civitatem, et dissipaverunt Calabriam totam*" (Lupus): 'The Saracens take the holy town of Gerace, and they ravage ("scatter") the whole of Calabria'.

Emirs of Sicily: Abd-Allah ('Abdullah) al-Kalbi, 985-989; then his son Yusuf b. Abdallah, Abu 'l-Futuh, called "*Thiqat al-Dawla*", an honorific bestowed by the Fatimids meaning 'Reliance of the State', 989-998. His reign saw the high point of Kalbid power and prosperity, the court at Palermo becoming a centre for poetry and intellectual activity (Bosworth 2004; NCHM 2000: 668).

5. Palestine and Egypt: The Fatimid ruler of Egypt, Aziz, who had a Christian (Melkite) wife, appointed his wife's brother Orestes as the Melkite or 'orthodox', non-Monophysite patriarch of Jerusalem and another brother Arsenius as the (Melkite) Metropolitan of Cairo. (Most Egyptians were Coptic or monophysite Christians who acknowledged the Coptic patriarch.) (Shaban p.205). Cf 1010.

The majority in the Levant (and indeed in Spain too) remained Christian for half a millennium or more after the Muslim conquest. Thus "Biruni, . . . who lived at Khiva [in Khorasan: present-day western Uzbekistan] c. AD 1000, speaks of them [Nestorian Christians] as [still] comprising *the bulk of the population of Syria, Irak [sic] and Khorasan*, and as superior to the orthodox [Melkite Christians] in intellectual ability" (*Encyc. Brit.* 1912 edn). Likewise in

al-Andalus: in Muslim-ruled Iberia, it took many centuries for the population to change from nearly all Christians to a large majority of Muslims.



Above: It was in the late 980s that the Bulgarians pushed out the Byzantines, conquering south to Larissa and reclaiming the north-eastern sector as far as the Black Sea. Qqq The 'West Bulgarian' capital was at Ohrid from about 986. The Bulgarian patriarchate moved successively from Vodena (Edessa) to Prespa and finally (about 990) to Ohrid. Only in 997 did Samuel formally take the title of Tsar (Stephenson 2003: 61)

Most atlases place the Pechenegs (a Turkic-speaking steppe people) on the northern bank of the Danube in AD 1,000. The present map may well be meant to show that Bulgarians would have dominated the Pecheneg tribes in the region nearest to them.

986-997:

1. Present-day Albania: As concerns the Balkans, the records for this period are poor, but during this time Samuel's Bulgarians attacked and took control of East-Roman Epirus and Dyrrhachium (Durrës) (Vine 1991: 193). Or a little later: Treadgold 1997: 523 proposes in 999. Basil could not respond as he was tied down by the various rebellions in Anatolia.

2. "West Bulgaria": The Basilica of St. Achilleios at Lake Prespa, with a view onto the lake, is built at Ochrid/Prespa on the modern Albanian-Greek border. - The church is a three-aisled, wooden-roofed basilica with a narthex and domes over the *parabemata* (the rooms to the right and left of the *bema* or raised platform for the altar). It was founded in ca. 986-990 by tsar Samuel of Bulgaria. Initially it was the cathedral of Samuel's short lived 'west Bulgarian' empire.

987:

Italy: "*Anno 987. occisus est Sergius Protospata a Barensibus mense Februarij, et mortuus est Adraliscus [sic] à Nicolao Crioti mense Augusti xv. die*" (Lupus): 'Sergius the protospatharios is killed by the men of Bari in February, and Adraliscus dies by (at the hands of) Nicholas *krites* [the province's civil administrator, judge and tax collector] on 15 August'. Nicholas was a rebel leader. See 989.

The chronicle adds this: "*et obscuratus est Sol*", 'the sun is darkened/obscured'. Unfortunately no eclipse took place in that year, the neehrest to Bari beeing in 993 (across Libya) and in 990 (across Ukraine).

2. Civil war: Rebellion by Bardas Phocas, general in the East. He strikes an agreement with his fellow rebel Bardas Sclerus, who promises to recognise Phocas as emperor. The rebels capture all of Asia Minor and take control of the Hellespont, controlling trade to Constantinople.

The Revolts of the Two Bardases

The civil war in Asia Minor required Basil's full personal attention and Russian help, and so put a temporary halt to campaigns in Bulgaria, until 991. Samuel's Bulgarians were thus able to consolidate their position in Macedonia, take Dyrrachium, and embark on conquests in Thessaly on their own account.

"Bardas Sclerus was released from Baghdad in the winter of 987. He re-entered imperial territory and immediately revived his rebellion in the area around Melitene. *His operation was bankrolled by Baghdad*; his troops were drawn from local Bedouin and Kurdish tribesmen. By spring 987 Bardas Phocas was hastily reassigned to his erstwhile position of domesticus to deal with the Sclerus threat. However, his loyalty to the emperor soon evaporated. By August, or September at the very latest, Phocas had declared himself emperor." —Holmes, website, loc. cit. Cf 988: truce with the Fatimids.

The second revolt of Bardas Phocas 'the Younger', hitherto domestic of the East, came to a head on 14/15 August 987 when he defected from Basil's side and was proclaimed emperor at "Chresianus" [Charsianon, central Asia Minor]. Sclerus had meanwhile escaped from Baghdad, and, according to the terms he concluded with his rival Phocas, was to have Constantinople and the European provinces, while Sclerus was to rule over Asia Minor. Barely a month later Phocas broke his word and on 14 September *Sclerus was imprisoned by him* at Tyropaeum (between Melitene and Lycandus) and stripped of all imperial insignia.

Holmes: "Whenever Sclerus and Phocas held high military office they were dangerous: as generals they were able to negotiate alliances with neighbouring states, hold imperial fortresses, and sequester taxes. *Without public office they lost these resources and their revolts immediately fizzled out.* This is exactly what happened when Sclerus returned from exile in 987." See 989.

2. Kievan Rus opts to convert to Christianity. According to the legend, prince Vladimir received Jewish (Khazar), [Muslim](#) (Volga Bulgars), Latin (German), and Greek (Byzantine) [legates](#), who urged him to adopt their respective [religions](#). The Greeks finally triumphed.

To the Jews: *"How can you hope to teach others while you yourselves are cast out and scattered abroad by the hand of God? If God loved you and your faith, you would not be dispersed in foreign lands. Do you expect us to accept that fate also?"*

To the Muslims: *"Vladimir listened to them, for he was fond of women and indulgence, regarding what he heard with pleasure, but circumcision and abstinence from pork and wine were disagreeable to him. "Drinking", he said, "is the joy of the Rus. We cannot exist without that pleasure."*

Ambassadors from Kiev then visited Constantinople, and were dazzled by the great Church of Hagia Sophia: *"the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty"* (Russian Primary Chronicle).

Thereafter Vladimir marched with an army towards the Taurida, and in 998 took Kherson in the Crimea; then he sent ambassadors to the Emperors Basil and Constantine, asking for the hand of their sister Anna, which he obtained on condition that he would become a [Christian](#).

987-89:

SW Georgia: Between [987](#) and [989](#), the 'pre-Georgian' (Iberian) prince David II of Tao joined his friend [Bardas Phocas](#) in a revolt against the [East-Roman emperor Basil II](#). This was defeated (989) and David undertook to cede his lands to the empire on his death. Yet he was able to secure for his heir, [Bagrat III](#), an opportunity to become (after 1000) the first ruler of a unified Georgian kingdom (Iberia and Abasgia).

987-1010:

Armenia: Building of Ani cathedral, seat of the monophysite patriarch or "Catholicus". And a new line of double walls was built around the city in 989, *trebling its size*.

The Armenian principalities and Georgia ("Iberia") were the eastern-most Christian states, wedged between Byzantium and various Muslim border emirates. See 1000.

988:

1. Italy: Saracens threaten Bari (Kreutz pp.119 ff). - *"Depopulaverunt Sarraceni vicos Barenses, et viros, ac mulieres in Siciliam captivos duxerunt"* (Lupus): 'The Saracens lay waste to the Barian villages, and [other] villages, and they lead (away) the captured women to Sicily'.

Kalbid emir of Sicily: Yusuf, 986-98.

2. The East: (a) A brief period of peace occurred in 988 when the Fatimids agreed to receive a Byzantine embassy which asked for a truce. Basil needed

to devote his energies to fighting the Phocas revolt (Holmes DIR website).

(2b): Fatimid Palestine: Al-Muqqadasi, d. 988, describes how Byzantine *shalandis* (Gk *chelandia*, large decked war-galleys) and *shinis* (lesser vessels) used to pull into the harbour near Caesarea "bringing with them captives taken from the Muslims, for ransom at the rate of three for 100 dinars" (quoted in Agius p.55).

3. France: Nascent Western aristocratic and royal families consistently tried to associate themselves with Byzantine imperial splendour and charisma. Thus in 988 Hugh, the first Capetian king of France, wrote requesting (unsuccessfully) a Byzantine bride from Basil II for his son (Holmes 2005: 62).

988-89 (or 989-90):

1. Italy: The patrikios John Amiropoulos [Ital. *Ammirapolo*] was *katepano* or military governor-general. The post seems to have been left unfilled for some years after his departure; command in Italy fell to an out-posted senior officer of the Constantinopolitan regiment of the Excubitors (Holmes 2005: 434, citing von Falkenhausen). Thus Lupus mentions Peter the Excubitor under 990 and the *comes* (count) Asto or Atto under 991. Cf also 989 below: Leo the Hicanatus.

2a. Byzantine-Russian alliance: Basil marries (988) his sister Anna [aged 25] to the Russian ruler Vladimir, who accepts baptism. *This begins the conversion of the Viking Russians to Christianity* (paganism was largely suppressed by 1015).

Holmes: "Even if, as historians now believe, there were many Rus conversions in this period and many Rus principalities, the importance of 988 lay in the fact that the Russian Primary Chronicle, compiled in its current form in the early twelfth century, chose to record the conversion of Vladimir as the seminal moment in the creation of Kiev, that principality to which all others eventually became subordinate."

2b. In return for the marriage with Anna, **the Varangian Guard** [Táγμα ton Varágon: Gk *Varangon*, Baraggwn]* was established: an elite infantry division of 6,000 Norse-Russians or Russo-Scandinavians in Rhomaioi service, distinguished by their heavy two-hand axes** and round shields. They attended the emperor as his personal escort on campaign (Benediktz 2007: 44; D'Amato 2010:15; the figure '6,000' is supplied by the contemporary Armenian writer Stephen of Taron: see Treadgold *Army* p.79).

(*) In medieval Greek, beta (b, B) was pronounced as "v".

(**) The Varangian Guard, created in 988, was an elite division of "Viking" – mainly Russo-Norse and Russo-Danish – infantry. They wore an iron helmet, a mail tunic to the knees, and carried a round shield. As well as their famous two-hand axe, they wore a sword, suspended from a baldric or transverse shoulder-strap.

D'Amato proposes that the **Varangian axe** was 120-140 cm long: around 4.5 feet; the metal head about 18 cm from side to side, and about 17 cm or

seven inches from point to point across the blade. There is, however, some evidence that they were more like the length of a regulation baseball bat, i.e. around 107 cm [42 inches]. (O'Rourke 2009). Which is to say: their axes were of generous rather than giant size. Compared to a modern (or medieval) wood-chopping axe, the blade was thin and light. After all, one had to swing the axe many times in battle.

Although originally 6,000 men were inducted, Heath 1976: 11 believes the guard was only about 3,000 strong over the next few centuries. We may imagine, I suppose, there were two or three *taxiarchies* – battalions of 1,000 – of Varangians in a major field army after AD 1000.

Defeat of Bardas Phocas's Rebels, 988-89

3. Asia: "In late 988 or early 989, Rus' troops [the regiment thereafter named the Varangian Guard] helped Basil to destroy a rebel army led by Calocyros Delphinus [formerly catepan in Italy] at Chrysopolis (opposite Constantinople). On 13 April 989 the emperor took the field against Phocas [the rebel Bardas Phocas] in battle at Abydus [on the eastern shore of the Dardanelles opposite Gallipoli] carrying the Blachernae icon of the Virgin. Basil's brother Constantine was also present, later claiming that his was the spear which slew the rebel. Yet, as both Scylitzes and Psellus acknowledge, the exact fate of Phocas was unknown. Some contemporaries believed he fell in battle; others that he was poisoned. What is clear is that *Basil decided to make brutal examples of the rebels. Delphinus had been impaled* [sic*] *after his defeat. After Abydus, Phocas's head [he was killed during the battle] was sent on a grisly tour of the empire.*" —Catherine Holmes, Basil, www.roman-emperors.org/basilii; accessed March 2006. In Leo Diaconus, these events are related in X:9.

(*) "Impaling" (Gk *anaskolopismos*) means being tied up and exposed on a forked stake, and *not* having the stake inserted into or through one's body (Notes to Leo the Deacon, trans. Talbot & Sullivan p.155). Thus Skylitzes (Wortley p.319) writes of Delphinus being "hung on a [forked] gallows" [Gk *phourka*]. One source says he was crucified (Stephen of Taron, cited by Holmes in Magdalino 2003: 49); but Constantine the Great had abolished crucifixion and replaced it with hanging on the *phourka* (a fork-shaped gallows) and execution by the sword: ODB 2:768, 3:1622; Rautman 2006, 30-31.

Psellus on the Battle of Chrysopolis in the summer of 988: - "The emperor Basil was well aware of disloyalty among the Romans, but not long before this a picked band of 'Scythians' [i.e., **Varangian Russians**: see next] had come to help him from the Taurus, and a fine body of men they were. He had these men trained *in a separate corps*, combined with them another mercenary* force, divided by companies, and sent them out to fight the rebels [under Bardas Phocas]. They came upon the insurgents unexpectedly, when they were off their guard seated at table and drinking, and after they had destroyed not a few of them, scattered the rest in all directions. The remnants of the enemy actually banded together and opposed Phocas

himself, with considerable enthusiasm".

"Basil personally took part in these operations with the Roman army. He had just begun to grow a beard [sic! - he was aged around 31] and was learning the art of war from experience in actual combat. Even his brother Constantine took his place in the battle-line, armed with breastplate and long spear" (Psellos, *Chronographia* 1:16).

(*) This use of the word 'mercenary' [Gk *misthophoroi*] is unhelpful because easy to misinterpret. The Varangian Guard were of the same status as the Gurkhas in the British Army or the French Foreign Legion: 'ethnics', elite professional soldiers, enrolled for long-term service, a fully integrated line division of the army, and famed for their loyalty. There was nothing fickle or wavering about the Varangians! They were the very opposite of the stereotypical condottieri of Renaissance Italy, who were seen as avoiding battle when possible, and also shirking hard work and winter campaigns. According to Machiavelli, fl. 1519, the condottieri fought each other in grandiose, but often pointless and near-bloodless battles.

In his first personal military victory, the Varangians helped Basil put down the rebels under Bardas Phocas: battles of Chrysopolis, 988, on the Asian shore opposite the capital, and Abydos, 13 April 989, at the S. end of the Dardanelles. Phocas for his part used a corps of *Iberian* (Georgian) troops. With Phocas's death at Abydos, Basil's power was in the ascendant.

Arab sources give a good account of the *Rhos* as fighting men. They were invariably infantry; and the fame of Russian swords is mentioned by al-Kindi in the 800s and al-Buruni in the 1000s; after a raid into the Caucasus in 943 it is said that the Muslims dug up the buried Russian dead to recover their swords (Davidson pp.111 ff).

Battle of Abydos, as related by Psellos: "The two faced one another: on the one side, by the sea, the emperor's forces; on the higher parts, the rebels, with a great space between. When Phocas discovered that Basil and Constantine [the co-emperors] were in the enemy's ranks, he no longer put off the battle. That day, he decided, was to be the turning-point of the war, the day which was to determine the future of the Empire. ... he gathered about him some foot-soldiers. The men I refer to were the *finest fighters among the Iberians*, all of them young men, just growing their first beards, in the flower of their youth, tall men and men of equal height, as though they had been measured off with a ruler, armed on their right with swords, and irresistible when they charged.

With these warriors about him, under one standard, Phocas moved forward to attack in front of his army. Gathering speed, he made straight for the emperor with a wild war-cry, his sword uplifted in his right hand, as if he intended to kill the emperor there and then. While Phocas was so boldly charging towards him, Basil rode out in front of his army too. He took his stand there, sword in hand. In his left hand he clasped the image of the Saviour's Mother, thinking this ikon the surest protection against his opponent's terrific onslaught. Phocas swept on, like a cloud driven on by violent winds, whirling over the plain. Meanwhile those *who were stationed*

on either flanks [probably light infantry] hurled their javelins at him. Among others, slightly in front of the main army, was the emperor [co-emperor] Constantine, brandishing a long spear.

After he had galloped forward some distance from his own men, Phocas suddenly slipped from his saddle and was thrown to the ground. At this point the accounts of different authors become contradictory. Some contend that he was hit by the javelin-throwers and fell mortally wounded. Others aver that he was overcome by a sudden faintness, the effect of a stomach disorder, and so fell down from the saddle. Whatever the true explanation may have been, Constantine arrogated to himself the proud distinction of having slain the rebel" (Psellos).

Although not much attached to rituals, in this case Basil did allow a triumph to be held. It reached its highpoint in the area between the Forum of Constantine I and the Arch of the Milion. As in earlier times, the head of the defeated enemy (Bardas) was publicly displayed and insulted, and various leaders from among the rebels were humiliated by being paraded on asses. To express his gratitude for the Virgin's aid, Basil also issued a commemorative coin (McCormick p.177).

When Skleros submitted in 989, he was, we presume, pleasantly surprised that Basil sought his advice on the ruling of his Empire. The latter received the following advice, as Psellos recalled it in his memoirs, translated as *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* I, p.23: "Cut down the governors who become overproud. Let no generals on campaign have too many resources. Exhaust them (said Skleros) with unjust exactions to keep them busy with their own affairs. Admit no women to the imperial councils. Be accessible to no one. Share with few your most intimate plans." Psellos introduced this advice by noting that "it was not the sort of advice one would expect from a general; in fact, it sounded more like a diabolical plot."

4. The Bulgarians under Samuel re-capture Berrhoea in Macedonia: *Verrioa*, west of Thessaloniki. —Macedonian Berrhoea, near Thessalonica, must not be confused with the other Berrhoea, north-west of Adrianople/Edirne. See 990/94.

The Croatian prince Drzislav, 969-997, supported the Romanics against the Bulgarians and was recognised as an independent monarch in 988. Serbia was under Bulgarian rule; the Croatian-Bulgarian border intersected the Dalmatian coast about halfway between East-Roman Spalato/Split and Ragusa/Dubrovnik.

989-990: Italy: The German emperor Otto III, aged nine, and his 'Greek' mother, the Byzantine-born queen-regent Theophano, visit Rome.

989:

1. Italy: Excursion from Bari by the catepan John Amiropoulos who removes the rebel leaders Leo 'Icannato' [Leo the Hicanatus*], Nicholas Criti [the *krites**] and Porphyrius. Lupus: "*descendit Ioannes Patricius, qui et [also called] Ammiropolus, et occidit Leonem Icannatum, et Nicolaum Critis, et*

Porphyrium". See further 998-99.

(*) The *Hikanatoi* were a guards cavalry regiment, one of the elite army units headquartered in Constantinople. We may guess Leo was seconded to Italy with a detachment. The *krites* was the civil administrator of a province, who ran the administration when the military governor was on campaign. Thus, while the details are not known, the rebellion was clearly a serious one.

2. 25-26 October (overnight): An earthquake strikes Constantinople, destroying part of the walls and many houses and bringing down the western arch and part of dome of Hagia Sophia (Leo Diac X:10). The church had to be closed until the Armenian architect Tridat (Tiridates: *Trdat Mendet*), creator of the great churches of Ani (AD 1001) and Agine, finished repairing it in 993-94. Leo (ibid.) says it took "six" years for Basil II's workers to complete the repairs to the church.

989-90:

In 989 the Buyids are forced out of Mosul by an alliance of the Hamdanids and 'Uqailids. Once the town was taken, the latter turned on the former and ruled Mosul in their own right (from 992). Power shifted between the Uqailids and Buyids thereafter, mostly in favour of the former

989-998:

Italy: It seems that the post of *katepano* was left unfilled in this period, perhaps reflecting the fact that military resources were stretched in campaigns in the Balkans and the East. Command over local civil and military administration in East-Romanic Italy appears to have been in the hands of a senior officer from the Constantinopolitan regiment of the *Exkoubitores*, no doubt posted there along with a detachment of troops from that regiment. He governed from Bari (Holmes 2005: 434). Cf 992: naval weakness in the Adriatic.

Muslim incursions became both more frequent and serious during this period, perhaps because the Saracens knew how weak the Byzantine forces were (ibid p.437).

Senior officers in Italy, according to Hofmann's *Lexicon Universale*:

a. *Nicolaus krithes, cognomine Calabritus, eodem annô, Adralistum interfecit* ["Nicholas the krites or judicial official, called Calabritus, in the same year has killed Adralistus"]. Evidently Nicholas was a Byzantine official who subsequently rebelled and was killed in 989 by the new catepan: see next.

b. *Ioannes Patricius, qui et Ammiropolus* ["the patrikios John also called Amiropoulos"], was catepan in AD 989. *Hic Leonem Icannatum, Nicolaum Critim et Porphyrium interfecit* ["here he has killed Leo the Hicanatus,* Nicholas the krites, and Porpyrius"].

c. *Tubali*, AD 990. *Petrum Excubitum occidit* ["he - Tubali - kills Peter the Excubitor"*].

d. *Macrotheodorus Excubitus, occisus a Maraldo* ["Macrotheodorus the Excubitor, killed by Maraldus"], AD 997. This occurred at Oria (see André Jacob, Jean-Marie Martin, Ghislaine Noyé, 2006: *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine: acquis et nouvelles recherches*. Volume 363 of Collection de l'École française de Rome, École Française (Roma). École française de Rome, 2006).

Von Falkenhausen, in Magdalino 2003: 153, proposes that various factions or clans variously combined with or against the catepan, but, as she says, their personal and political motivation is not recorded.

Nil named for 997-998?

(*) That is, officers drawn from the elite Tagmata or central regiments, the Hikanatoi and Excubitors.

989-1020:

Height of Armenian power under king Gagik I. Ruling from Ani, he presided over a set of subkings. Cf 1000.

In 990:

The Bulgarians controlled the entire NW Balkans from eastern Serbia south to N Epirus; and to the Aegean coast near Thessaloniki; and eastward to the Black Sea coast below Varna. - The Byzantine-Bulgarian frontier ran from just west of Thessaloniki (see next: 990) to just north of Philippopolis (Plovdiv). See next, and 995, 996.

990/91-94:

Second Bulgarian campaign: Basil II retakes Macedonian Berroia, south-west of Thessalonica.

990-98:

Emir of Sicily: Yusuf al-Kalbi (Abu-l-Futuh Yusuf).

991:

1. d. Theophano, Byzantine-born queen-regent of Germany. See 994: Otto III takes power.

2a. Italy: Failed landing on the island of Capri by a Saracen fleet under the command of "Boalim".* Boalim and his pirates, who had already attacked Amalfi, now sacked the island of Galli and attempted to land on Ischia, the largest of the islands off Naples, but they were prevented from landing on the island by a violent storm, allegedly called up by a long-dead saint named Constant. —Arvid Andrén, *Capri: from the stone age to the tourist age*, Paul Åströms förlag, 1980, p.93.

(*) This may be the Arabic *abu 'alim*, 'father of the city, elder'. Cf Basaieh Bualim, Algerian Minister of Culture and Tourism in the 1980s. Or *ali:m* ("aleem") 'scholar, one who has knowledge: learned, wise, all-knowing'.

2b. Taranto: "*Anno 991. fecit bellum Asto [sic: Atto] Comes cum Sarracenis in Tarento et ibi cecidit ille cum multis Barensibus*" – 'Count Atto makes war with the Saracens at Taranto, and there he fell [i.e. was defeated*] with many men of Bari.' – Chronicle of Lupus. Cf 992 below.

(*) Count Atto I of Chieti survived the battle: he was still active in 993 (G A Loud, 'Monastic Chronicles in the Abruzzi', *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXVII [2004 conference], p.120, note 82).

Evidently he was the same as the Atto, son of the marquis Trasmund of Spoleto who himself had fought the Saracens at Taranto in 972, and was still active in 978. And a *comes* Atto, son of Atto, appears in 984, linked to Chieti in the duchy of Spoleto. And a later Atto, son of Trasmund of Chieti, appears in 1028. It seems clear therefore that our leader of 991 was a Lombard (non-Greek) from the north (Katherine Jansen, Joanna Drell, Frances Andrews – 2009, *Medieval Italy: texts in translation*; also Foundation for Medieval Genealogy: http://fmg.ac/projects/medlands/central%20italy.htm#_toc246900380).

Wessex-England: The Danes defeated the English at the Battle of Maldon. It is commonly said that fewer than 7,000 Danish Vikings were involved. Indeed Perret prefers even fewer: about 2,500 on each side [Bryan Perrett – *British Military History for Dummies*, 2007]. Both sides used *infantry shield-walls*.

991-92:

The East: Michael Bourtzes was appointed (c. 991) *doux* of Syrian Antioch. Romanus Skleros, who probably held the post of *domestikos* of the *scholai*, was sent (992) from Constantinople with the Tagmata to aid him against the Fatimids (Holmes 2005: 347, citing Yahya of Antioch). See next and 992-95.

992:

1. Syria: Proceeding from Damascus, a Fatimid expedition under the general Manjutakin, an ethnic Turk, attacks north, taking Homs and Hama, on the Orontes N of Damascus, and defeats the Aleppans and their Byzantine allies (Brett p.351).

2. Italy: The misery inflicted by Saracen raids extended to Conversano in the hinterland - 30 km below Bari and west of Monopoli. We read of a local landowner there lamenting the catastrophic effect on local society (Holmes 2005: 437).

3. The Adriatic: *First* military-commercial treaty between Venice and Byzantium, the Golden Bull or imperial edict of 992. In effect Basil was recognising Venice as a sovereign state, not a vassal, acknowledging the Venetian victories over the empire's enemies in the Adriatic (Rotman 2009: 80, citing Pertusi).

Evidently the East Roman navy was no longer capable of playing an effective

role in the Adriatic. At any rate, commercial privileges are now given to Venice: Venetian slave-merchants were granted special privileges in the imperial city and at Bari in Italy *in return for transporting East-Roman troops in time of war*. Cf 1002/03: 100 Venetian ships relieve Byzantine Bari.

Each Venetian ship had to pay 17 *solidi* [gold coins] (reduced from 30) to be allowed to sail to and from Constantinople: two *solidi* to enter the Sea of Marmara and 15 *solidi* to exit. The exit tax from the Bosphoros was seven (7.5) times the entry tax, no doubt reflecting a rough proportion of the value of exports to the empire to imports from the empire (Toynbee p.335; Nicol B&V p.41; Burman p.117; Day in Laiou ed. 2002: 809; Herrin 2007: 158). Importantly, their rivals, Jewish and Lombard traders, and merchants from Bari and Amalfi, continued to pay the older, higher tariff.

Apart from furs and slaves, who were mainly pagan Slavs, the main cargo with which Venetians filled their ships as they turned from the rivers to the sea was lumber for shipbuilding, like slaves often sold to the Muslim states including Egypt. —David Jacoby, 'Venetian commercial expansion', in *Byzantine trade, 4th-12th centuries: the archaeology of local, regional and international exchange*, ed. Marlia Mango, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009, p.383.

By 1000 all the trade between the Western empire of Germany-North Italy and the Eastern Empire will be carried by Venetian ships. (This was a slow development: the first large galleys had been built at Venice in AD 852: Jacoby, loc.cit. p.372).

4. Dalmatia: The West-Bulgarian Emperor *Samuilo* (Samuel) burned and devastated Ragusa (Dubrovnik).

992-95:

Syria: Fatimid armies repeatedly besieged the Muslim emirate of Aleppo, an East-Roman protectorate. See 994.

992-1009:

Venice: Under Pietro Orseolo II, 992-1009, the prestige of the republic revived.

The Greco-Latin* towns of the Istrian (Slovenian) and Dalmatian (Croatian) coasts, incessantly menaced by the Slavs, voluntarily acknowledged the dominion of Venice, and from about AD 1000 the doge, with the consent of the Emperor of Constantinople, was styled *Duke of Dalmatia*. He gained a good victory over the [Saracens](#) at Bari (1002/3: see there). Cf 996 – tribute.

(*) The common people of the 'Byzantine' towns spoke, not Greek or Slavic, but Dalmatian, which was a Romance tongue; about 50,000 people spoke it in the 10th century (Bartoli's estimate: Wikipedia, 2011, 'Dalmatian', citing his *Das Dalmatische* 1906). Presumably the elites were multi-lingual in Dalmatian, Greek and Latin.

Dalmatian speakers lived in the coastal towns: Zadar, Trogir, Split, Dubrovnik, and Kotor (Jadera, Trau/Tragur, Spalato, Ragusa and Cattaro), each of these towns having a local dialect, and on the islands of Krk, Cres and Rab (Vikla; Latin "Crepse"/Italian "Cherso"; and Arba). The western-most Romance speakers were those of the island Cres/Cherso, in western Croatia,

not far from today's Italy; the easternmost were those of the town of Kotor/Cattaro in present-day Montenegro.

994:

1. Syria: The Fatimids in 993-94 brought in supplies from Egypt via Tripoli to strengthen Manjutakin's (or Mangutakin) expedition. *Strong naval support kept the Byzantine fleet at bay.* The Fatimids then commenced a year-long siege of Aleppo (Brett 2001: 351). In 994 near Apameia, on the Orontes SE of Aleppo, Manjutakin defeated Michael Burtzes, the dux of Antioch, and Leo Melissenos, forcing emperor Basil to turn his attentions away from Bulgaria to the eastern frontier. See 995.

Holmes: "Byzantine armies based at Antioch under the leadership of Michael Burtzes were defeated in open battle in 992 and 994. The second of these reverses was so serious that Basil II marched from his wars in Bulgaria with a detachment of the Byzantine field army, crossed Anatolia *in a little over two weeks*, and arrived unexpectedly in northern Syria in the early spring of 995. The Fatimid army fled and Michael Burtzes was sacked as dux." - See details under 995.

2. Apulia: Arabs take and briefly occupy inland Matera (Kreutz p.123; NCMH III: 644).

"Anno 994: obsessa est Matera à Sarracenis tribus mensibus, et quarto capta ab eis. . . . in qua mulier quaedam fame coacta proprium comedit filium" (Lupus): "Matera is besieged for three months by the Saracens and in the fourth is captured by them, (during) which a certain woman, compelled by hunger, eats her own son".

994: Otto III, son of Theophano, takes the reins of power in Germany and from 996 assumes the title "emperor". - See 996.

995:

1. Syria: As noted, Basil II personally made a lightning campaign in the East. He repelled the Fatimid threat to the Byzantine protectorate of (Hamdanid) Aleppo. - The journey, which normally took 60* days, was accomplished in a quarter of the time, i.e. 15* (or 16 or 17) days. But only **17,000** of the 40,000 men who set out reached Aleppo within that time.

(*) The average marching rate was 20-21 km per day for a large combined infantry-cavalry army. Thus the 'normal' 60 days = up to 1,260 km, which probably represents the distance from Constantinople to Cilicia. The distance to Aleppo is nearer 1400 km. That would have required infantry to march for up to 70 days. Using "1,400" 15 days represents an impossible 93 km p.d (17 days = 82 kpd). The upper limit for *crack* infantry marching on foot is at best 40 kpd for perhaps no more than a week. We can deduce from this that the fast-travelling 17,000 who reached Syria first were *all cavalry* and *mounted* infantry on horses and mules. Cf historical marching rates cited by Haldon in Pryor 2006: 141.

The Fatimids had put Aleppo under siege. It was now a East-Roman protectorate, so its amir appealed to Basil. Putting his troops, or some of

them, on mule-back (presumably more rode horses than rode mules), Basil rushed to Aleppo's defence. The Fatimids were defeated and fled back to Damascus.

Basil II launched a campaign against the Muslims and won several battles in Syria, relieving Aleppo, taking over the Orontes valley, and raiding further south. Although he did not have the force, or not the inclination, to drive into Palestine and reclaim Jerusalem, his victories did restore much of Syria to the empire. *No emperor since Heraclius had been able to hold these lands for any length of time, and they would remain Byzantine for the next 75 years* (Wikipedia 'Basil II', accessed 2011).

To drive home his superiority, Basil sacked Rafaniyyah (Raphania, Rephalia) and Emesa [Homs, near the present-day Lebanese-Syrian border], and raided as far south as Tripoli before heading back west to face Bulgarian issues (Jenkins p.318).

Holmes: "*Basil rarely campaigned in the East. Even in 995 and 999-1000 his interest was focused on using force to compel his neighbours to accept treaties and alliances. After 1000 local potentates supervised by the dux of Antioch were used to police the frontier.*" Cf 996-97: fear of Bulgaria.

2. Basil replaces Bourtzes with Damian Dalessenos as *doux* of Antioch; the latter served until 999 and maintained the peace (Holmes 2005: 347, citing Yahya).

3. Samuel of Bulgaria invades Hellas/"Greece", proceeding through Thessaly to Boeotia. See 996.

995-99:

The Balkans: Nikephoros Ouranos was *domestikos* of the *scholai* or generalissimo and on active service in the Balkans, based at Thessaloniki. Skylitzes probably exaggerates in saying he was *doux* of "the whole West"; but certainly he seems to have had wider powers and was equipped with a rather larger army than his predecessors (Holmes 2005: 409). See next and 997.



Above: The governor of Thessalonica, Gregory Taronites, is ambushed and killed near the city in 996. Left: Byzantines. Right: Bulgarians.

Note the near-identical dress and equipment. The corselets of the Byzantines look like they are lamellar; the Bulgarians may be wearing mail or leather armour.

996:

1. Macedonia: Seeking to take control of the great west-east highway, the Via Egnatia, Samuel led his army to Thessalonica. Close upon Thessalonica itself, the Bulgarians ambushed and killed the city's governor (*doux*) Gregory Taronites (Skylitzes ed. Wortley p. 323). Following this success, the Bulgarians penetrated deep into Greece, raiding and pillaging even to Corinth in the Peloponnesus. The Byzantines intercept them on the way back: see 997.

Samuel's Bulgarians held most of Albania and Epirus including Dyrrhachium and Ioannina. In the centre their rule extended to Macedonian Berrhoea. But in the north-east, the Empire still dominated greater Thrace almost as far as Preslav and Pliska (map in NCMH vol 3 p. 569).

2. The Adriatic: Venice, though scarcely yet ranking as a separate power, was already vitally interested in the safe navigation of the Adriatic and paid 'tribute' to the coastal Slavs in Dalmatia, particularly the Narentans (who controlled the Split-Dubrovnik area of what is now SE Croatia), to safeguard this. Tribute was paid occasionally till as late as 996 (Vlasto 1970: 190). See 1000: expedition to Dalmatia.

3. Legislation: "The last, and most draconian, novel in the corpus was issued

in 996 by Basil II. This required that all properties acquired by the 'powerful' within free peasant *choria* (village-districts) since 927 should be restored to their former owners without compensation." —Holmes, <http://www.roman-emperors.org/basilii.htm>; accessed 2011.

Village society was not egalitarian. Some of the landowners had acquired vast holdings that in fact constituted small estates. In a novel of 996, Basil II instanced a layman called Philokales, a simple villager who rose to be protovestarios, Master of the Wardrobe, and who gradually took over all his village and turned it into his estate (Lefort in Laiou ed., 2002).

4. N Italy: German-Papal alliance. The young German king Otto III —son of the East Roman / Byzantine princess, Theophano—parades into Italy. Pope John XV having died before he reaches Rome, Otto instals the *first German-born Pope*, his cousin and protégé Bruno von Kärnthen as Pope Gregory V, who now crowns Otto emperor in Rome. Cf 996 (Pope Gregory) and 998.

Not until the time of Emperor Otto III, 983-1002, did Western emperors consistently start calling themselves "*Imperator Romanorum*" or 'Emperor of the Romans' in direct challenge to the "Basileus* Romaion" of Constantinople. Otto III took this step on the prompting of his (late) mother Theophano [d. 991], a princess from Constantinople who understood the subtleties of the problem. But quite possibly his main aim was to prevent anti-German dissidents within the city of Rome from appealing for aid or intervention from Constantinople (Shepard in Magdalino 2003: 31). Indeed no sooner had Otto departed than the anti-German faction among the Romans violently unseated Gregory V and, with the active support of Emperor Basil, acclaimed the bishop of Piacenza, John (Ioannes) Philogathos, as Pope John XVI (997-998). John was a Greco-Calabrian** who had been Otto's childhood tutor. John was soon unseated by a synod of Western bishops, captured by Otto's troops, and blinded.

(*) Pronounced 'vassilefs'. In medieval Greek, beta (b, B) was pronounced as "v".

(**) Although an ethnic 'Greek', Philogathos is shown clean-shaven in the Latin style in a contemporary portrait. The church in Rossano, his birthplace, followed the 'Greek (Byzantine) Rite'.

The German imperium was conceived as a four-fold dominion over "Gallia" (Lorraine), "Germania" (Germany proper), "Slavenia" (the Prussian-Bohemian borderlands) and "Roma" (northern Italy). Cf 998, 1001 and 1001-02.

5. Sicily: Midpoint in the line of Kalbid governors (nominally under the Fatimids of Cairo).

Arab vs East-Roman Coinage

Kalbid-governed Sicily: Minting of *gold coins* from 996; and trade with Christian Italian merchants, including those from the nominally Imperial city of Amalfi. (The latter, or at least its upper class, remained culturally more Greek than Latin.)

Travaini writes that “in the Byzantine theme of Calabria, Byzantine *folles* [copper coins] were widely used until at least the end of the 11th century, but by the end of the 10th century, *Sicilian gold taris with Arabic legends had become the favourite gold coin*. This appears from the written evidence, which shows taris being hoarded in the treasures of Calabrian monasteries and the value of landed property being expressed in them. Taxes and penalties were expressed in [Byzantine] nomismata, but this does not mean that such coins were used in actual payments. Folles of Romanus I, 920-944, are most numerous in Campania, anonymous folles of ‘Class C’, ca. 1034-41, in Calabria, and folles of the period 1057-71 in Apulia.” —Travaini, ‘Normans between Byzantium and Islam’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, www.doaks.org/dop55/dp55ch09.pdf, accessed Oct 2009.

996-7:

Greece: The Bulgarians under Samuel invade Romanic Hellas, raiding as far as the Peloponnesus, but are defeated during their march back by the *domestikos* Nicephorus Uranus or *Ouranos*. Although defeated (997) near Thermophylae, Samuel later in the year will capture Dyrrhachium, re-opening the way into *East-Roman* Dalmatia (present-day coastal Croatia) (Holmes 2005: 349). See 997-1000 and 1004.



Above: Battle of the River Spercheios, 997. From the miniature in the Madrid Skylitzes. Left: Byzantines; right: Bulgarians. Points to notice: the Byzantines' long maces.

Surprise Victory at the River Spercheios, 997

Skylitzes has an illustration [above] showing the East-Roman cavalry at the battle of Spercheios [996 or 997 in Thessaly: near present-day Lamia] with lamellar or scale armour corselets, small shields and conical helmets without neck-guards (aventails). But this text dates to the 1100s, and may not reflect the arms and armour of the 10th C.

The two armies were separated by a river, and Samuel did not believe it was fordable. Hence the Bulgarian camp was imperfectly defended. Nicephorus Ouranos's scouts managed to find a fordable stretch and the Byzantines

crossed over, surprising the Bulgarians in their unfortified camp. Samuel and his son were both badly wounded, and the greater part of the Bulgarian expedition was either killed or captured (Haldon 2001: 107).

Holmes 2005: 349 calls this victory "unexpected but convincing", and it established Uranus's reputation.

Holmes, 'DIR' website: "The strongest evidence for Byzantine weakness during the 990s comes, paradoxically, from the crushing victory that Basil's close associate Nicephorus Uranus achieved over Samuel at the river Spercheius (close to Thermopylae) in 997. *The unexpected glee, relief and surprise* that Uranus's victory at Spercheius caused among his circle of correspondents, including Leo, Metropolitan of Synada, *reflect just how dangerous Byzantines believed the Bulgarians to be.*"

Here is the full extract from Skylitzes: "Samuil set out against Thessalonica and deployed the main part of his army in ambushes and traps, and he sent only a small part on an incursion to Thessalonica itself ... Samuil camped on the opposite bank. Because of the torrential rains, the river rose and caused floods, so that no battle was expected at that moment. The (East-Roman) *magister*, however, by inspecting the upper and lower reaches of the river, found a place through which he thought he could cross. In the night, having roused his troops, he crossed the river and *attacked Samuil's soldiers in their carefree sleep*. A very large number of them were massacred, without anybody thinking of defence. Samuil himself and his son Roman were wounded, receiving grave wounds, and would have been taken prisoners, had they not mixed with the dead, lying as though dead.

When night fell, they secretly fled towards the Aetolian Mountains [north of the Gulf of Corinth, i.e. initially they fled to the SW] and from there, [north] across the peaks of these mountains, crossed the Pindus and took refuge in Bulgaria ['west Bulgaria': modern Albania]. And the *magister*, after freeing the East-Romans who had been taken prisoners, and stripping the Bulgarians who had fallen, looted the enemy camp, and with very rich booty returned to Thessalonica with his troops...".

Despite the victory of Nikephoros Ouranos over tsar Samuel at the Spercheios River in Thessaly (996 or 997), the struggle was indecisive. Basil tried to attract the Serbs as allies against the tsar (says G. Ostrogorsky, *Byzantion* 19 [1949] 187-94) and made generous promises to Bulgarian aristocrats.

c.996?

The western Balkans: In the 990s tsar Samuel and (perhaps as early as 990) the Bulgarian Patriarchate moved on to Ohrid [near the border-point of FYROM, Albania and Greece], where the most impressive physical remains of his reign are still to be seen (Curta 2006: 241). He will proclaim himself Tsar and his primate as Patriarch in 997/98.

996-98:

Dalmatia: The Venetian doge Peter or *Pietro* II Orseolo in 996 abrogated the

payment of the customary tribute to the 'Croats' in return for access to the Adriatic.

Faced with threats to Byzantium's outpost towns in Dalmatia, both from pirate raids and from Samuil Tsar of Bulgaria, who by 997 had conquered Durazzo (Durrës) and much of Duklja and Serbia, Basil II Emperor of Byzantium requested Venetian help to defend its interests and in 998 recognised the Doge Pietro Orseolo as the Emperor's official representative in Dalmatia, according him the title 'dux of Dalmatia' and the honorary position of proconsul.

In 998, or more probably in 1000: see there, the doge compelled the **Narentine*** islands and the coastal 'cities' (read: towns) in Dalmatia as far as Split to acknowledge his suzerainty as representative of the East-Roman emperors. – Date of 998: www.magma.ca/~rendic/chapter4.htm. See 997, 998 and 1000.

(*) The river *Narenta*, today's Neretva, supplied the name for the 'Narentine' Slavs: proto-Serbo-Croatians - pirates and slavers of 'Pagania', as their realm was called, for they were militant anti-Christians. They operated from the Delta of that river and the nearby islands. The Neretva enters the Adriatic between Split and Ragusa (Dubrovnik); there are seven large islands and many small ones off that stretch of the coast.

Wikipedia 2011: "Their best expertise and the main income of the 'Pagans' was piracy. The loot was split traditionally just as the catch of fish - one half goes to the provider of the ships and/or the organiser of the hunt (*archon*: Lord or Archont) and the other half is split amongst the crew members. They were especially notorious for their slave-trade."

"The main type of vessel the Narentines used was the Slavic *sagena* (from Latin "*sagitta*", meaning "arrow"*) from the beginning of the 9th century, a variation of the Scandinavian Viking Drakkar ("long ship"). *It was a long, relatively shallow vessel that was specific for its high speed with a slender body, a sharp bow and a mast. It was manned by 40 crew members - 20 oars on each side - who were at the same time professional [or better: semi-professional] fighters.*"

(*) The derivation from 'sagitta' was Ducange's guess. More likely *sagena* meant 'net, dragnet, seine'; its etymology is obscure (see the long discussion by K M Woody 1970, pp.41 ff). It occurs in Matt. 13:47 as (Greek) *sagene*: "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind". The ends of a long-drawn net or sweep-net are taken by boats to the open sea where they are drawn together, thus capturing all that the net encircles.

Curiously no one seems to have linked the name of the medieval Croatian vessel to the Russian word, *sagene*, a measure of length equal to some seven English feet.

996-99: Gregory V, *first German pope*: emperor Otto's cousin.

c. 997/998:

Samuel is crowned "Tsar" or emperor of Bulgaria. At this time the 'West

Bulgarian empire' is expanding in the west against the Serbs and to the south-west against the Byzantines (Stephenson, *Legend* p.17). See 1000.

997:

1. The Adriatic: The Bulgarians under Samuel/Samuilo raid along the coast of *East-Roman* Dalmatia as far west as the capital-town Zadar or Jadera, Gk: *Dhiádhera*. Much damage was done but no territory annexed (Vine 1991: 275). See below under 997-1000.

2. Italy: "*Occisus est Marcho [sic] Theodorus Excubitus in Civitate Oriae à Smaragdo, et Petro germanis*" (Lupus, online at www.thelatinlibrary.com): 'The *exkoubitor* [military commander] Theodoros is killed in the town of Oria by Smaragdus and his brother Peter'. ('Marcho' has the same grammatical case as 'Smaragdo', and so may have been his first name or praenomen, i.e. Marcus®Marco. Cf *Martius*, the month of March.) See 998.

Von Falkenhausen, in Magdalino 2003: 153, says that every rebel tried to carve out a political role or a local lordship. She notes that Smaragdus probably held the post or rank of *topeteretes ton skholon*. A *topoteretes* was a deputy commander in an army regiment. There were two *topoteretae* in the *Tagma* of the *Scholae*, each commanding 3,000 men (Treadgold, *Army* p.103). Perhaps he had held that rank earlier in his career? The *Scholae* (likewise the *Excubitors*) were an elite cavalry force based in Constantinople. It seems most unlikely that Smaragdus could have commanded so many elite troops in such a junior province as S Italy. Quite likely he was simply the military deputy under the catepan (governor) John Amiropoulos and led just a handful of *Scholae*.

997-1000:

Samuilo's/Samuel's Bulgarians briefly dominate Byzantine Dalmatia.

It was at this time (998) that the pope found it convenient, evidently to please Samuilo, to create a new archbishopric at Ragusa, modern Dubrovnik, nearer Samuilo's seat at Ochrid, thus separating "upper" [southern] Dalmatia from the archdiocese of Split in "lower" [northern] Dalmatia (Harris 2003: 41).

Ecclesiastically, Romance-speaking Dalmatia was Latinate or "Catholic", acknowledging Rome, rather than "Orthodox", acknowledging Ochrid or Constantinople - if we may be allowed to use terms that are anachronistic. But politically it was loyal, in name at least, to 'Greek' Constantinople.

c. 998:

Lower Balkans: d. St Nikon 'the Penitent', Gk *Metanoieta*: 'the repentner', most famous of the Peloponnesian missionaries. Active in Crete as well as in Greece.

The Slavs of the central and southern Balkans were by now almost all Christianised. Because the language of religion and education was what we call 'Greek' [*Rhomaïke*, Byzantine], Obolensky states that they "*became Greeks*" (p.113). Mango 1980: 27 more correctly observes: "Since there was no notion of Greekness, it is hard to see how there could have been one of hellenisation". But certainly they continued to pay taxes to Constantinople and their priests spoke "Greek", known in this era as 'the *Roman* language':

glossa Rhomaion.

Although the "Greek" (*Rhomaion*) language would become dominant, a number of wholly Slavic-speaking districts continued to exist within the re-Byzantinised Balkans.

The Slavs in the region of Patras, after their subjugation in the early ninth century, had become serfs of the local bishop and, in addition to the ordinary taxes, were obliged to maintain a lodging house in the town for the free entertainment of the provincial governors, imperial agents and foreign envoys. Others such as *Melingoi* and the *Ezeratae*, two Slavonic tribes who lived west of Sparta in Laconia in the Southern Peloponnesus, were compelled *in the tenth century* to accept a headman appointed by the provincial governor, to perform military service under him, and generally to carry out the public duties incumbent on crown peasants. —Obolensky 1974: 110, citing Constantine Porphyrogenitus's "De Administrando Imperio".

998:

1. Emperor Basil II turns 40.

2. Italy: "*Venit Busitus Caytus cum praedicto Smaragdo Barum mense Octobris, et praedictus Smaragdus Eques intravit Barum per vim à porta Occidentali, et exiit iterum: tunc Busitus cognita fraude discessit*" (Lupus): 'Busitus* the caytus (= Arabic *qa'id* or *ca'id*, 'war-leader, governor') comes to Bari in October with the aforementioned knight or cavalry commander (*eques*) Smaragdus**, who enters Bari by force through the Western Gate and marches out again (leaves): then Busitus, learning of the trick (deceit), departs'. See 1000.

It has been well remarked that we do not have enough information to understand even the general political and personal motivations of the protagonists named in the Italian chronicles of this time (van Falkenhausen, in Magdalino 2003: 153).

(*) Cf Arabic Abu Sidi, 'father of the master, lord (*sidi*)'. Or *sa'id*, 'happy, lucky' ® Abu Sa'id.

(**) In Greek and Latin, the name means 'emerald'. There was a Italian saint called Smaragdus, d. ca. AD 303, killed in Diocletian's persecution. The Byzantine exarch of Ravenna from 585 also bore this name.

998-99:

1. Fatimid threat to Syria: Again Basil II personally intervenes. He conquers Homs in Syria, besieges Tripoli (999) and then winters back in Tarsus. Nikephoros Ouranos is appointed governor of Antioch, replacing Damian Dalassenos. Ouranos wrote the last of the military treatises or *Taktikai* inspired by the 10th century revival of Byzantine military science (McGeer p.79).

Byzantine forces based at Antioch under the command of Damian Dalassenus suffered another defeat in 998. Emperor Basil responded by ravaging Fatimid-held territory in the Orontes valley before cutting westwards to the

coast to invest Tripoli. Although the siege was unsuccessful, Basil's swift military response to the defeat of Dalassenus persuaded the advisers surrounding the young Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim, to come to terms. The result was a peace which lasted without serious rupture from 1001 to 1016.

Iranian (Daylami) axe-infantrymen and archers formed the centre of the Fatimid line at the battle of Apamea (Syria, autumn 999). Basil's forces included Varangians, so that **elite axemen fought on either side** (see McGeer pp.234 ff on the Daylami; also Treadgold 1997: 552).

This campaign also saw a naval battle (998) between the Arabs (Fatimids) and East-Romans off Tyre and Tripoli, won by the Muslims. This marked the **first reappearance of the Byzantine fleet in eastern waters for many years** (Hocker in Gardiner 2004: 93). Pryor & Jeffreys p.385 list this as one of the more disastrous losses suffered by the imperial navy.

2. The Adriatic: (Nicol prefers to date this to AD 1000: see there.) In 998, according Vine, 1991:275, following the Bulgarian incursion of 997, Basil appoints the doge of Venice as his official representative in Dalmatia, giving him the title of dux (*doux*) of Dalmatia and the court rank of proconsul. Byzantine suzerainty remained but it was now to be exercised through Venice. No Venetian representative entered any of the Dalmatian towns as yet; they continued to administer themselves but swore oaths of loyalty to Venice. The doge added "et Dalmatiae" to his title.

3. Otto III of Germany sends an embassy to Byzantium seeking a marriage alliance. (The unmarried Basil was aged 40.)

4. Ja'far b. Yusuf al-Kalbi or Dja'far II, 998-1019, becomes 8th Kalbid Emir of Sicily. See 1015.

Consolidation in Italy

"There are", writes Holmes, "several signs of a *long-term strengthening of the Byzantine position*. Several commanders sent from Constantinople [to Italy] after 995 served for very long periods: Gregory Tarchaneiotes (998-1006); Basil Mesardonites (1010-1016); Basil Boïoannes ["bo-yo-unness"] (1017-c.1028). This contrasts with the turbulent early years of Basil's reign when many senior officers in the region served for only a few months (namely Calocyros Delphinas in 982-3; and John Amiropoulos in 988-9)." - Catherine Holmes, 'Basil II', at <http://www.roman-emperors.org/basillii.htm>.

Tarchaneiotes (998) seems to have been the first since 989 appointed to the post of *katepano*; during that period a lesser commander, sometimes an officer of the Excubitors, had governed S Italy.

998-1002: High point of Muslim expansion in Spain/al-Andalus under Al-Mansur.

998-1006:

Italy: The *protospatharios* Gregory Tarchaneiotes, known as *Gregorio Tracanioto* or *Tracamoto* in Italian, was the relatively long-governing catepan of Italy, from 998 to 1006. The average tenure was fewer than four years.

Tarchaneiotes put down the revolts of Maraldus in Bari and Theophylact in Gravina; he removes the Saracens; and grants benefices to the local pro-imperial clergy.

"Anno 999. descendit Trachamotus Catepanus, qui & Gregorius, et obsedit Civitatem Gravinam et comprehendit Theophilactum". – 'The catepan Gregory Tarchaneiotes arrives, and he besieges the [interior] town of Gravina, and captures [the rebel] Theophylact' (Lupus).

Gravina lay on the Appian Way inland from Taranto.

In December [999](#) and again on [2 February 1002](#), Tarchaneiotes restored and confirmed the possessions of the abbey and monks of [Monte Cassino](#) in [Ascoli](#), i.e. Ascoli Satriano near Foggia. In [1004](#), he fortified and expanded the 'castle' (fortified village) of [Dragonara](#) on the [Fortore](#) River above Foggia in N Apulia. It stood guard against any incursions from the west – the Lombard duchy of Capua-Benevento. He gave Dragonara three circular towers and one square one. He also strengthened nearby [Lucera](#). —Thus Wikipedia, 2011, under 'Gregory Tarchaneiotes'.

998-1019:

r. Kalbid emir of Sicily, Ja'far b. Yusuf, "Taj al-Dawla", an honorific meaning 'Crown of the State'.

999:

1. fl. Symeon "the New Theologian", 949-1022, theologian and **mystic**, abbot of St Mamas in the capital: "His is the groundwork on which all later Byzantine mysticism is built" (Dudley & Lang p.210). Haussig calls him "the first" Byzantine mystic.

2. (Holmes, 'Basil II', DIR website, dates this to AD 1000): Thrace: In [*anno mundi*] 6508, indiction 13 [= AD 999/], responding to a rebellion in Byzantine east Bulgaria, "the Emperor sent a strong army against the Bulgarian fortresses beyond the Haemus [Balkan] Mountains ... *The Byzantine troops captured Great and Little Preslav, as well as Pliska, and returned unscathed and victorious*" (Skylitzes).

999-1003: Sylvester II (born Gerbert), *first French pope*. He had been tutor to the young German prince Otto II (aged 10 in 965; acc. 973). Later he was abbot of Bobbio before becoming tutor to Otto II's son Otto III (aged three in 983, when he succeeded to the throne of Germany; aged 10 in 990). [Pope Gregory V](#), 996-999, Otto III's cousin, appointed him Archbishop of [Ravenna](#) in 998. Otto III supported his election as pope.

999-1007 (or until 1011):

Syria: Nikephoros Ouranos was governor of Antioch. Author of a *Taktika* or military manual.

Territory and Population in 1000

Except where indicated, the information here comes from McEvedy's *New Atlas*. We have also used the *Times Atlas* of 1994.

The empire extended from the boot of Italy (Calabria-Apulia), east thence to Crete, Cyprus and Armenia.

(a) In Sardinia the Christian nobility may have still regarded themselves as vassals of the Eastern empire, but in practice they were wholly independent - contending against the Muslims who had occupied part of the island since 990.

Sicily and Malta were in Muslim hands. On the Italian peninsula the "Lombard" (Latin) principalities of Salerno and Capua-Benevento separated 'Greco-Italian' Naples from the Byzantine super-province of 'Langobardia', our Calabria-Basilicata-Puglia.

Territorially, southern Italy was dominated by Byzantine super-province of Calabria-Lucania*-Apulia/Puglia - jointly called 'Longobardia' - and ruled by a Catepan based in Bari. In Apulia, Byzantine rule extended as far north as a line drawn west-east from Benevento to the Gargano peninsula below Siponto (Manfredonia); Benevento ruled Siponto itself (map in Kreutz p.xvi). The other south Italian realms in order of geographical size were: (1) the principality of Salerno *which perhaps still extended SE to the Gulf of Taranto*: modern Basilicata;* (2) the principality of Benevento**; (3) principality of Capua*; (3) the post-Byzantine 'semi-Greek' duchy of Naples; and (4) a tiny duchy of Amalfi, wholly surrounded by Neapolitan territory.

(*) It is unclear when the Byzantines took control of southern Basilicata, which became their Theme (province) of Lucania. Some say as early as the time of Nicephorus II (d. 969); others say not until about 1030 (cf Loud, 'Southern Italy', in NCMH III: 632). On first principles (rising Byzantine power and weakening Lombard rule by 900), one would expect the earlier date to be correct.

(**) Benevento and Capua in this period sometimes shared the same ruler.

By this time, only the dukes of Amalfi, who have specific commercial interests in Constantinople, and special political agreements with several Arab emirates, continued in their allegiance to the Eastern empire, receiving and displaying their East-Roman titles (van Falkenhausen, in Magdalino 2003: 142).

(b) The Balkans were divided about equally between Byzantium (south and south-east) and the 'West Bulgarian Empire' (north and north-west). The Bulgarians controlled our Serbia, Albania, northern Epirus and Thessaly. And the Bulgarians held a toehold on the Aegean coast below (south of) Thessaloniki, meaning that there was no land traffic to Athens except as allowed by them. Byzantium controlled the Chalkidiki peninsula including Mt Athos.

In Thrace/Moesia Bulgaria held Serdica (Sofia) while the empire held Philippopolis (Plovdiv). The boundary ran west-east, from a point (the Gates

of Trajan) between these two, to the Black Sea coast.

(c) Byzantium ruled all of Asia Minor as far as western Syria, Armenia and Georgia: see below under 1000. In Syria, its lands bordered two Muslim emirates: Hamdanid Aleppo (inland Syria) and ex-Buwayhid or Buyid Diyarbakir (upper Mesopotamia). Antioch was ruled by Byzantium.

With the weakening of Buyid rule from Baghdad, Byzantium now faced in the East a string of lesser Muslim emirates and Christian kingdoms, namely the emirates of Aleppo, Diyarbakir, various Armenian principalities and the kingdom of Tblisi or "Iberia". Cf 1000 below. These in turn are hedged in on their east by further emirates, namely those of Mosul, Azerbaijan and Arran. *This fact allows emperor Basil a fairly free hand in the west.* Cf 1000-05 below.

The strongest of the Islamic powers was the Fatimid caliphate of Egypt, which ruled from Tunisia and Egypt to Palestine and S Syria. Aleppo was a buffer state between Byzantium and the Fatimids, albeit there was a small direct interface between the Empire and the Fatimids in the littoral south of Imperial-Romanic Antioch (north of Fatimid Beirut).

The Population of the Empire and its Cities in A.D. 1000

The area of the Empire was somewhat less than one million sq km in AD 1000 (Treadgold 1997: 8), including of course mountains and forests and so on. Now Stathakopoulos 2008 offers conservative figures for population density in the whole Byzantine millenium of nine people per km² in tough times, rising to 15 per km² in fair to good times. On these figures the empire would have contained between 8.5 and 14.25 million people.

In the year 1000, after economic recovery and reconquest, the Romanic or Byzantine empire had expanded to encompass probably at least 12 million people according to McEvedy & Jones. Treadgold 1997 offers "11-12" million. A higher figure of 18 million is preferred by Tulane (1999), citing Russell (1958). This might have been made up approximately as follows: say 10 million (56%) in Asia Minor including Cilicia; one million in Thrace and Constantinople; five million in the Balkans including Greece; and two million altogether in the outlying areas (southern Italy and Syria).

Only about one million people lived in towns or cities (cf 494 bishoprics in 925: if episcopal seats averaged 1,500 people we have about 741,000 townspeople in those towns alone). The remaining 11 or more million (from 12 million) lived in dispersed farms, villages, military outposts and monastic estates. Thus if we apply a notional average of 500 people per 'broad residential unit', **the body of the empire was made up of perhaps 22,000 villages, rural estates, communes, monasteries and soldiers' holdings.**

The basic taxable unit was the village commune or *chorion*, whose members were jointly responsible for the payment of taxes to the imperial government. To use the technical term, the inhabitants were 'soldiery' in their fiscal obligations. In other words, if one villager died or disappeared, his 'pairs'

(other villagers), who might cultivate his land, had also to pay his part of the state taxes, at least until a revision of the cadastre was made and a partial fiscal exoneration (*sympatheia*) was granted to the village.

Big landowners constituted separate taxable units. They were called "persons" (*prosopa*), as opposed to villages. Their domains, called *prosateia*, were cultivated by free tenants, by dependent tenants (*paroikoi*), or by slaves.

For the following thought-experiment, will use a figure of 950,000 sq km as the size of the Empire. Let us now guess that only 10% was farmed. Dividing this by 22,500 units we have: an average of 4.2 sq km per commune or 1,038 acres (about *two acres per person*). *This looks slightly conservative*, even if we are counting vineyards and olive fields as well as wheat and barley fields. (Typically a single peasant family worked a holding of under eight hectares or 20 acres, i.e. less than *four acres per person*: Treadgold *Army* p. 174, citing Lefort).

Treadgold (*State*, 1997: 178) proposes that military lands – mostly the farms of the thematic (local provincial) troops – accounted for perhaps a *quarter* of the empire's cultivated and grazing land after 840. To analyse this we will start with "200,000" soldiers: fewer than the maximum that would be reached in AD 1025, which was 248,000 men: *ibid*, p. 576. We assume for illustration (but conservatively) that each soldier and his tenants hold or cultivate or use 50 acres* (20 hectares). Now $50 \times 200,000 = 10$ million acres, which is 40,469 sq km. Multiplying this by four to allow for non-military holdings we get 161,876 sq km for total land in agricultural or pastoral use, i.e. 17% of the empire. *This looks credible*. One imagines that up to 50% of Thrace and western Asia Minor would have been used for food production, but as little as five per cent in some other hilly and less fertile regions such as Greece.**

(*) In Antiquity, small farms were from 18-88 *iugera* (one iugerum is equal to about 0.65 acre), i.e. around the 30-acre mark. Medium-sized farms were from 80-500 iugera (singular iugerum), i.e. 52 to 325 acres. Large estates called *latifundia* were over 500 iugera. —K D White, *Roman Farming*, Cornell University Press, 1970.

Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army* p. 174, says that a single family with a pair of oxen could work a farm of 50-100 acres. He calls 144 acres (720 Byzantine modii) a "good-sized" farm.

(**) In modern Greece in the year 1964, when the country was 'semi-developed', about 14,000 sq km were given over to wheat and barley, or 11% of the country's total area of 132,000 sq km (Wikipedia, 2008, 'Agriculture in Greece'). Adding grapes, olives and other crops, the total under cultivation was probably around 15%, with perhaps 20% being used for primary production of all kinds including grazing sheep and goats.

Or working from the other direction, let us imagine arbitrarily that fully 30% of the Byzantine empire's land area was cultivated or closely grazed, i.e. 286,800 sq km or 70,869,823 acres. We divide by four to estimate the amount in military holdings: 17,717,455 acres. And finally to obtain a figure

per soldier-farmer, we divide by 200,000 soldiers: the result is 886 *acres* per soldier. This seems far too large, indicating that much less than 30% was farmed/grazed.

The Size of Cities

According to one source, <http://geography.about.com/science/geography>: consulted 2011, the largest cities in AD 1000 were as follows.

1. Umayyad Cordova [Sp: Cordoba] in Arabic Spain or *Al-Andalus*: "450,000" people [sic]; 2. Kaifeng in Song China: 400,000; and 3. Imperial Constantinople 300,000.

A more conventional ranking would be: 1. Kaifeng, 2. Constantinople, and 3. Baghdad. As noted below, McEvedy & Jones place Cordoba in the second rank, with fewer than 50,000 people.

Others: 4. Angkor, Cambodia 200,000; 5. Kyoto, Japan: 175,000; 6. Cairo in Fatimid Egypt: 135,000; 7. Buyid Baghdad, in present-day Iraq: 125,000; 8. Ghaznavid Nishapur (Neyshabur), Iran: 125,000; 9. Al-Hasa or Al-Ahasa, from 899 the oasis-capital of the utopian Shi'a republic of the Qarmatians, in what is now NE Saudi Arabia: 110,000; and 10. Patan (Anhilwara), India: 100,000.

(*) Strictly speaking 'Al-Hasa' is the name of the immense oasis. The urban seat of the Qarmatians was at al-Mu'miniya near modern Hofuf/al-Hufuf.

McEvedy & Jones give the following estimates for the cities lying west of India. Of the top eight cities, three were Byzantine; and of the top 23, four were Byzantine.

(a) Over 100,000:

Two cities: Baghdad under the Buyids; and Imperial Constantinople:

Loud in NCMH vol 2 p.72 would allow up to 300,000 for the Christian capital. McEvedy & Jones offer 'perhaps 125,000' people for Constantinople.

Treadgold 1997: 572 prefers 200,000 for Constantinople; up to 100,000 for Thessalonica (*ahead of Antioch*); and Adrianople perhaps 20,000 people; - McEvedy & Jones put the populations of these latter cities much lower.

(b) 23-49,000 people:

Six cities: ++Basra (Buyids); Byzantine Antioch and Thessaloniki; Fatimid ++Cairo and Alexandria; and Umayyad Cordoba in present-day Spain.

(++) = The major land trade route ran from Buyid-ruled Basra and Baghdad to Fatimid-ruled Damascus and thence to Fatimid Cairo.

In the 960s Nicephorus Phocas described Antioch as the "third city of the world", i.e. after Baghdad and Constantinople (in Leo Diac. 73.12-15): perhaps implying that Alexandria and (at that time) Cairo were smaller.

(Cairo reached its early peak around 1050.) He was probably not sufficiently familiar with distant Cordoba.

As noted, Treadgold prefers a high figure for Thessalonica: 100,000 in 904 and again by AD 1000, after its recovery from the sack of 904.

Fletcher proposes that Umayyad Cordoba had about 100,000 people, being "roughly equivalent in size to Constantinople"; but he also notes that contemporary observers reported Cordoba as significantly smaller than Baghdad (*Moorish Spain*, 1992: 65). Specifically, Ibn Hawqal, fl. 975, remarked that Cordoba was barely half the size of Baghdad.

(c) 15-22,000:

Fifteen large towns: **1 Nishapur in Khurasan (Ghaznavid eastern Persia); Buyid **2 Rayy: now part of modern Teheran, and **3 Hamadan in Iraq; 4 Shiraz and 5 Isfahan in present-day Persia; 6 Wasit; 7 Mosul; 8 Fatimid Mecca and +9 Damascus; 10 Byzantine Adrianople; 11 Muslim Palermo (Sicily: under Kalbid rule); 12 Kairouan in Fatimid Tunisia; and the lesser Umayyad centres of 13 Fez, 14 Seville and 15 Toledo.

(**) = Cities at the end of the 'Silk Road' route from central Asia.

All the Latin Christian cities, including Venice, Milan and Paris, were smaller. The largest, Venice, probably had about 10,000 people. But, if we follow *Encyc Brit* 15th edn, even obscure Rome had up to 20,000 people by 1075; or somewhat fewer than that if we follow G S Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in ancient Rome*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007: 78.

1000:

1. Macedonia: "The . . . Emperor again set out [in 1000: others say in 1001], against the Bulgarians via Thessalonica. He was joined by the governor of Berrhoea, Dobromir, who [had] surrendered the town to the Emperor and was honoured with the dignity of *anthypatus*. The defender of Servia [*Servia in Macedonia*, today's Kozani prefecture: near Mt Olympus], Nikola [a Bulgarian commander], who, because of his small stature was called by the diminutive name of Nikolitsa [*Nikulitsa*], put up valiant resistance and cheerfully endured the siege imposed on him. The Emperor, however, set himself the task of capturing the fortress [Servia] and succeeded [AD 1001], taking Nikolitsa himself prisoner. He deported the Bulgarians from there and left a garrison of Byzantines. After all this he returned to the capital, taking Nikolitsa with him, whom he honoured with the title of patrician."

"But the inconstant Nikolitsa escaped from there and returning secretly to Samuil, together with him began to besiege Servia. The Emperor, however, moved swiftly and lifted the siege from the town and *Nikulitsa fled with Samuil*. . . . The Emperor went to Thessaly and rebuilt the fortresses destroyed by Samuil, while those which were in the hands of Bulgarians he captured by siege and resettled the Bulgarians in the so-called *Voleron* [a section of the valley of the Struma]. After posting strong garrisons in all fortresses, he returned to the place known as *Voden* [the Bulgarian name of Voden, classical Edessa, in Greek Macedonia, west of Thessalonica]. Voden

is a *small fortress* situated on steep cliffs where the waters of the Ostrovo Lake fall after running unseen below the ground and coming to the surface again at this place. As the inhabitants of this town did not surrender of their own free will, the Emperor took it by siege. He deported them also to Voleron, then installed a strong guard in the town and returned to Thessalonica" (thus Skylitzes).

2a. The East: Basil II, accompanied by the *doux* of Antioch, Nikephoros Ouranos, campaigns (1000-01) against Armenia and our Georgia, the kingdom then called "Iberia". The name 'Georgia' is adopted only after 1008: see there.

There were perhaps 6,000 'Rhos' or Varangians in the army of Basil on his Armenian campaign (the figure supplied by D'Amato 2010: 7). He annexes the possessions of king David of Tao/Tayq in northern Armenia/western Georgia: north of Kars, west of Tbilisi, and converts them into a '**Ducate of Iberia**'. Cf 1022.

Armenia was Monophysite, while Georgia under king Gurgen (Giorgi, George) was 'Orthodox' or dyophysite Christian ("Melkite"). The seat of the Armenian patriarch, the "Catholicos", was at Ani, which today lies just inside Turkey near the present-day Armenian border.

When David of Tayq or Tao died early in 1000, Basil II happened to be in the east of the empire, wintering on the plain of Tarsus following his raids against the Fatimids in northern Syria. Hearing of David's death, he marched north-eastwards to collect his inheritance (see 989: the king of Iberia had been punished for backing Phocas by being forced to bequeath his kingdom to Basil). Having dispersed token resistance to the East-Roman take-over from the local Georgian nobility, the emperor garrisoned the key fortresses of Tao. He also accepted obeisance from a variety of neighbouring Caucasian princes, Muslim as well as Christian, who were rewarded with imperial titles. Cf next: Diyarbakir.

2b. Mesopotamia: Alliance with the Marwanid (Kurdish) emirate of Diyarbakir. When Basil II travelled from [Cilicia](#) to the lands of [David III Kuropalates](#) (Akhlāt and Manzikert near Lake Van), Mumahhid al-Dawla came to offer his submission to the emperor and in return he received the high rank of *magistros* and *doux* of the East and the promise that imperial troops would assist the Marwanids if they came under outside attack. —P Blaum, 'A History of the Kurdish Marwanid Dynasty (983-1085), Part I', *Kurdish Studies: An International Journal*, Vol.5, No.1-2, 1992, pp. 54-68.

4. Italy: "*Captus est praedictus Smaragdus à Trachamoto* [Gk Tarchaneiotes] *mense Iulij XI. Die*" (Lupus): - 'The aforementioned Smaragdus (see 998) is captured by [the catepan Gregory] Tarchaneiotes on 11 June.'

5. Dalmatia: The Venetian doge assumed, or had already assumed, the title 'Duke of Dalmatia', protecting the Romance-speaking Byzantine towns of Dalmatia against the Serbs and Bulgarians. *The Slavs were pushed back from the coast*. And it seems that the campaign was conducted *without* a request from the Byzantine emperor (Nicol, B&V p.43). See next, and cf 1005.

Venice and imperial Dalmatia

Venice made military efforts to control the Adriatic routes which formed the trade and communication line with the Levant. Pietro Orseolo II, r. 991-1009, crushed the 'pirates' (slavers) of the Adriatic Sea and brought the islands and a long stretch of the Dalmatian coast under the rule of Venice, thus relieving the commerce of the republic from a great and pressing danger.

Venice, in a campaign to suppress Slavic piracy, first attempted to dominate Dalmatia in 1000, gaining control or at least recognition of the coastal towns including (according to some) Romance-speaking Ragusa (Dubrovnik). However, it was unable to hold on to them for long; in 1018 Byzantium re-established direct sovereignty. And re-asserted its control in 1024: see there.

Whether Ragusa (Dubrovnik) formally submitted to Venice at this time is disputed; but certainly after 1000 Ragusa paid no heed to the doge; it soon returned to acknowledging Byzantium (Harris, *Dubrovnik* 2003: 35-36).

The fleet which achieved this result, supposedly "200" vessels, was led by the doge in person; it sailed on Ascension Day in May 1000, and its progress was attended with uninterrupted success. (Or this may have occurred in 998. According to the chronicler Johannes Diaconus, Orseolo's chaplain and secretary, the expedition started in the seventh year of Orseolo's reign, which would be 998; but Johannes contradicts himself and the more probable date is 1000: Hodgson p.173).

Pietro II Orseolo received recognition from the Romance-speaking *Byzantino-Dalmatians* at Ossero: Osor on the island of Cres; at Veglia: modern Krk, a northern island; Arbe: modern Rab Island; and Zara/Zadar, the capital town of imperial Dalmatia.

From Zara he fought the Croats, and further along, at Spalato (Split), he forced the pagan Narentines to negotiate. Then, after defeating the Narentines' tenacious resistance, Orseolo took from them Curzola: the present-day island of Korcula, sixth largest in the Adriatic: about half way between Split and Dubrovnik; and Lagosta: our Lastovo Island, south of Korcula. He thus "removed" the Slavs from the sea—or so says the website www.veneto.org/history/serenissima1—and placed the Imperial-Romanic Dalmatian coast under Venice's protection, assuming the title *Dux Dalmatinorum*.

In another account (by Carmen Debianci), the Venetian fleet crossed the Gulf of Quarnero (Fiuma Gulf), and, on 19 May 1000, moored in Bier, a harbour near the town of Osor (Italian: Ossero) on the mainly Romance-speaking island of Cres (Italian: Cherso).

At Ossero the doge was greeted as a liberator and was treated to feasts in which the non-Romance, Slavic population from the inland villages of the island also participated (ditto Hodgson p.171). According to later Italian historians, these Slavs were few in number and peaceful farmers.

On 5 June, the feast of the Pentecost, in the cathedral of Ossero, a solemn ceremony was held in the presence of their illustrious guest, the doge, in whose honour the "Laudi"(Lauds) were sung. Ordinarily this chant was

dedicated only to the emperor of Byzantium.

People from the nearby Romance-speaking islands of Krk (Veglia) and Rab (Arbe) came to Osseoro to render homage to the Venetian lord.

Having taken on extra recruits from among the Dalmatians, the expedition continued thence, south-east-wards, through the archipelago, or rather along the coast, to the main Dalmatian town, Romance-speaking Zadar (Zara). "There the notables of that region assembled, and formally elected to be under the government of that prince. Among others the Bishops of Veglia and Arbe came with the priors [mayors] of those cities" (John the Deacon, in Hodgson). There too, or thereafter, Orseolo met, to receive their fidelity, the representatives of the mainland coastal towns of Sebenik [Serbenico: a Slavic/Croatian town, between Zadar and Split]; Romance-speaking Trogir [Trau: west of Split]; Romance-speaking Split/Spalato; Slavic-speaking Omish/Almissa [SE of Split]; and, later, Romance-speaking Dubrovnik (Ragusa).

Other suppliants came to Orseolo at Zadar or at Split from the "surrounding" islands of Pag [Pago: north of Zadar, Brach [Brazza: south of Split, opposite Omish], the outermost island of Vis/Lissa, and from many other parts. The only exceptions were the islands beyond Brach: Hvar/Lesina and Korcula/Curzola, which were places of refuge and depositories for the booty of the Narentan pirates and (since the mid 900s) in their possession (Debianchi, 'History of the Island of Cherso', online at www.comunitachersina.com). There was a Curzolan dialect of Dalmatian, so presumably Korcula was partly Romance-speaking, partly Slavic.

Hodgson says it was at Trau that the brother of the deposed king of "the Slavs" (Croats) came to meet Orseolo, asking (in vain) by his aid in recovering the throne.

Then at Split Narentine envoys came to meet the doge, claiming to want peace. At the same time, however, a Narentine naval squadron circled around to attack a detached Venetian flotilla off Lastovo/Lagosta. Orseolo took his main force south to Narentine Korcula/Curzola, which his troops quickly captured, and then went on to invade and capture Lastovo/Lagosta (Richardson 1914: 144). "He won by the strong hand and subdued to his government the island of Curzola, whose inhabitants refused to obey his orders when he had demanded hospitality at the church of St. Maximus" (John the Deacon, in Hodgson).

Dubrovnik lay past (behind) the Narentan-held islands of Hvar/Lesina and Korcula/Curzola, around which its legates would have had to sail. In fact it seems Orseolo's fleet sailed (rowed) from Trogir/Trau to the islet of Majsan [in the channel NE of Korcula], which formed the base from which his men proceeded to conquering Korcula and then the neighbouring island of Lastovo. It was at Majsan or on Korcula, after taking Lastovo, that he waited for the representatives of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) to pay him tribute (thus www.world66.com/europe/croatia/korcula/history).

The Venetian chronicler's statement, that the Archbishop of Ragusa and his clergy took an oath of allegiance to the doge, is denied by the Ragusan writers. They say that an embassy was sent, but only to demand compensation for the Venetians' seizure of a ship in which some Narentine merchants had earlier been taken prisoners, which belonged to Ragusa.

Hodgson notes that the narrative of John the Deacon does not mention the

important and populous island of Brazza/Brach, nor (probably) those of Lissa and Lesina/Hvar, all of which lay on the doge's path as he sailed from Spalato/Split to Curzola and Lagosta.

After his men captured Korcula and Lastovo, Orseolo returned to Trogir/Trau, where he received the submission of the Narentines. The island of Pag (north of Zadar) was restored to the rule of Zadar.

4. Hungary opts for Latin Christianity. The Pope recognises Stephen as the first Christian king of Hungary. But politically Stephen was prepared to aid Byzantium against Bulgaria: see 1004.

1000: a. Otto III opens Charlemagne's grave at Aachen. Among the goods he placed into the grave was a fine silk cloth, decorated with elephants in medallions, that bears an inscription saying it was *woven in the imperial workshops in Constantinople* (Rice, p.106).

b. Otto recognises the independence of Poland.

Byzantine Monasteries

Peter Charanis has argued that in the year 1000 the Byzantine Empire had more than 150,000 monks and over 7,000 monastic establishments, many obviously very small. Indeed the vast majority of the Byzantine establishments housed only between 10 and 20 monks. —Charanis, 'The Monk as an Element of Byzantine Society', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No 25, 1971.

1000-05:

The Balkans: Basil begins a great counter-offensive, leading the army in person. He eventually conquers northern Bulgaria. See 1002-03.

In 1000 a large Byzantine army under Theodorokan and Nikephoros Xiphias was sent against targets in eastern and northern Bulgaria including Preslav and Pliska. These towns were taken but *not retained*. So this first incursion seems to have been more of a morale-building exercise than an attempt at permanent occupation (says Holmes 2005: 414)

From 1001 the East-Roman offensive was continuous. Basil invaded the regions of Serdica (Sofia), [Macedonia](#), Vidin, Skopje (1004), and Dyrrhachion (1005).

In the west (our Greece) in 1001 Basil himself led an army against a series of mountain forts west of Thessalonica. Then in 1002 he led a campaign to the far NW against Vidin on the Middle Danube; on his return south he raided Skopje. "A Bulgarian attack on Adrianople in 1002, while Basil II was campaigning against Vidin on the middle Danube, suggests that the struggle for eastern Bulgaria continued into the early years of the 11th century" (Holmes 2005: 414).

The effect of attacking Serdica was to divide Samuel's realm into two. In the north-east, Preslav, 'Little Preslav' or *Presthlavitza*, and Pliska fell quite easily (although they were not retained in Byzantine control). In the north-west, however, the going was harder, e.g. at Vidin (Stephenson in Magdalino

2003: 111).

While there was a good deal of fighting, much was achieved by striking alliances with the enemy commanders in charge of towns and fortresses. The offer of Byzantine titles and a generous stipend brought quite a few 'hard points' peacefully over to Basil's side, including Berroia, Servia, Skopje and Dyrrachium. "Basil's advance is marked not so much by a trail of blood as of alliances" (Stephenson in Magdalino 2003: 130).

1000-07:

Thrace: Period of service of the general Theodorokanos at Philippoupolis and Adrianople. Holmes 2005: 415, 439 notes that, as also in Italy, frontier commanders enjoyed relatively stable careers after 1000.

ca. 1001:

West Aegean: Death of Saint Athanasios, founder (AD 963) of *the Great Lavra* on Mount Athos, which was completed soon after his death – the first monastery on the Holy Mountain.* Irrigation and, later, windmills would make the community self-sufficient. See 1045.

(*) Today the peninsula is home to 20 medieval Eastern Orthodox monasteries, 17 of which are around 1,000 years old.

1001:

1. Armenia: From Antioch, the *doux* Nikephoros returns to Tao to repel an incursion led by Gurgen of Iberia [Georgia]. —Catherine Holmes 2005: 349, citing Stephen of Taron.

2. The East: Treaty between Basil and the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim; renewed in 1011. (The Fatimids ruled nearly the whole south of the Mediterranean, from Algeria and Sicily to Syria: a longer maritime zone than that of Byzantium.)

"Peace with the Fatimids in 1001 allowed Basil to concentrate the empire's military energies in the west, safe in the knowledge that his frontier army in the east was under the tutelage of his most loyal associate [Nicephoros Ouranos]." – Holmes, website loc. cit.; also Holmes 2005: 307.

1001-02:

German Empire (= North Italy + Germany): Otto III attempts to quell a revolt in Rome, but dies [24 January 1002], aged just 21, *of malaria*.

Byzantine Italy: In 1002 the German ambassador, Archbishop Arnulf of Milan, arrived in Bari from the East escorting Basil's niece, princess Zoe [or less likely, her sister Theodora: the sources are equivocal], Otto's promised East-Roman bride, only to learn that the Western emperor had already died (Norwich, *Apogee* p.259)

1001-05:

Basil renews his campaign against the Bulgarians under Tsar Samuel in Thrace and Macedonia.

1002-03 (or 1004):

Italy: From May or 2 March to October 1002 or 1003, Bari is besieged by a band of Sicilian Saracens (Berbers) under the renegade or "apostate" Saphi or Safi. Peter/Pietro II Orseolo's Venetians join with the Byzantines to relieve the town.

Lupus and the *Annales Barenses* date this to 1002; the inscription below says 1003, while Nicol says it was in 1004 (Gay, *l'Italie meridionale*, p.369; Nicol B&V p.45. Ciggaar 1996 follows Nicol). The catepan Gregory Tarchaneiotes commanded the troops of the garrison. The Byzantine year began on 1 September. Thus the previous March was in the earlier year. Since 3 September is dated "1003" in the Vieste inscription (see below), the *siege must have begun in anno byzantino 1002*.

Safi, a Sicilian 'Greek', is called "the apostate" in the *Annales Barenses*. In Arabic the name Safi means 'pure' and can connote 'clear, serene, bright, clean, white, honest'. 'Apostate' would mean a convert from Eastern Christianity to Islam; and other sources call him 'Luca [i.e. Loukas] Kafiros V' [cf Arabic *kafir*, 'unbeliever', 'non-Muslim']. Evidently his band of brigands was based inland at Pietrapertsosa near Potenza. —Michele Loconsole, 'Puglia e Islam, le civiltà a confronto' online at www.historiabari.eu; and Vito Salierno, *I musulmani in Puglia e in Basilicata*, *Prestige. Scritti di varia umanità*, P. Lacaita (Rome) 2000, p.54; English trans: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2007, p.91.

"*Obsedit Saphi Caytus Barum 2. Maij usque ad Sanctum Lucam mense Octobris, tunc liberata est per Petrum Ducem Veneticorum*" (Lupus): 'The caytus (= Arabic *caïd* or *qa'id* 'leader, chief, governor') Safi besieges Bari from 2 May to the feast of Saint Luke in October [i.e., 18 October]; then it is freed by Peter, doge of the Venetians'.

The event is documented in a carving in a grotto on an island off the port of Vieste, which states that on 3 September 1003, **100 ships** commanded by the doge Peter paused there on their way *back* from fighting the Saracens who had occupied Bari (mentioned in a leaflet about *Gargano Parco*, published online at www.parcogargano.it/immagini/rivista/pdf/maggio2005.pdf; accessed 2009).

The Latin text of the carving is as follows [my translation, MO'R]; the inscription is all in capitals, but for ease of reading I have used upper and lower case:

In n. Dni [*In nomine Domini*, "In the name of the Lord"] Dei et Salvatoris nri [nostri] ih [Ihesu] xri [Christi] anno ab Incarnacionis eius mil. iii ["the year 1003 since the Incarnation"] mens. septi die. iii ["on the 3rd day of September"] indic. i ["in the First Indiction"] introivit in isto porto ["arrived in this port"] dom [i.e. *dominus*, "the lord/master"] Petro dux ["doge"] Venetiquor [i.e., Venetiquorum, "of the Venetians"] et Dalmatianor [Dalmatianorum] cum naves C. [C = *centum*, "with 100 ships"] preparatus ad bellum contra Sarracenos qui sedebant [sic: *qui sedebant*, "who were encamped"] supra vares [sic: *supra Bares*, 'above, around Bari'] et pugnavit cu il. [*cum iis*, "and he has/having fought with them"] alii occiderat ["had killed some"] alii in fugam miser [sic: *miserat*, "while others to flight he had sent/put"]. —Latin text online,

2011, at Luigi Bressan's website "Storia Medievale",
www.mondimedievali.net/pre-testi/bressan.

2. Further battles in western Thrace and the far north-west: Basil besieges (1002-03) Vidin on the Danube: NW of modern Sofia, near the present-day Bulgarian-Serbian-Rumanian "corner". In the meantime, Samuel advances (1002) into Thrace and sacks Adrianople; Basil captures and garrisons Vidin; the Bulgarians are defeated near Skopje. Cf 1005.

As noted, Catherine Holmes has proposed that the Bulgarian attack on Adrianople took place in 1002, while Basil II was campaigning against Vidin on the Middle Danube, showing that the struggle for *eastern* Bulgaria also continued into the early years of the eleventh century.

'Catholic' (Latin) Hungary was allied with 'Orthodox' (Greek) Byzantium; and Hungarian troops assisted Basil at Skopje.

Cedrenus-Skylitzes: "In the following year, indiction 15 [i.e. 1003], the Emperor set out on a campaign against Vidin and captured it by force after full eight months of siege. While he was busy with the siege, Samuil with a swift movement suddenly fell on Adrianople on the very feast of the Assumption of the Virgin [28 August in the Julian calendar]. With a sudden assault he also seized the fair annually held there and attended by a great crowd, and, after collecting much booty, he returned to his country. And the Emperor, after fortifying Vidin very well, returned to [towards] the capital without losses, having devastated and destroyed all the Bulgarian fortresses on his way. When he approached the town of Skopje, he found Samuil calmly camping across the Axios river, which is now called Vardar. Relying on the river being in flood and thus impossible to ford, he had set up his camp in a negligent manner. But a soldier found a ford and led the Emperor through it. *Shocked by his sudden appearance, Samuil hastily fled in confusion*, and his tent and the entire camp were captured. And the town of Skopje was surrendered to the Emperor by Roman, the son of Peter, Tsar of the Bulgarians, and brother of Boris, called also Simeon after his grandfather and placed there as governor by Samuil. The Emperor received him and after honouring him for his decision with the title of patrician and prepositor, sent him as a strategus [army general] to Abydos.

Continuing from there, the Emperor set out for Pernik [in far western Bulgaria, SW of Sofia], whose defender was Krakra, a man excellent in military matters. He spent a considerable time there and lost no small number of soldiers in the siege. Finding the fortress impregnable and Krakra impervious to flattery or other promises and proposals, he returned to Philippopolis, whence he [Basil] returned to Constantinople."

1002-08:

N and NW Balkans: Basil occupied Preslav and Pliska in 1002, Skopje in 1004. By 1008 all Bulgaria would be at Basil's mercy and he had earned himself the (posthumous) title of 'the Bulgar-slayer' (*Voulgaroktonos*). The nickname 'Bulgar-slayer' was in fact not used until after his death.

Several **new provinces** were created by about 1004: a Duchy of '**Paradunavum**' (Paristrum, Dristra) or outer Bulgaria: the south bank of the lower Danube and its hinterland; and three **new themes: Great Preslav**;

Pliska, i.e. inner Bulgaria; and **Philippopolis**, i.e. outer Thrace (Treadgold 1995: 37).

1003:

Italy: "*Sarraceni obsederunt Montem Scaviosum mense Martij: et nihil profecerunt*" (Lupus): 'The Saracens besiege Mount Scabiosus [Montescaglioso, SSE of Matera] in March: and they accomplish nothing'.

1003-4:

Italy: As we have seen, Venice's fleet helped (in 1003) to defend Bari from Arab siege. But Venice was not Byzantium's only Italian naval ally. In 1006 the Pisans will contribute to an East-Roman victory off Reggio di Calabria. Cf next - Rossano.

1004:

1. The Balkans: Vidin was only taken after an eight-month siege, being too strong to storm. From there Basil took his army south along the Vardar where he attacked Skopje. An engagement was fought there between Basil's and Samuel's armies, ending in a victory for Basil, but Samuel managed to escape. Skopje then fell. *Basil now controlled about half of what had been Samuel's state* (Skylitzes ed Wortley p.328; Fine 1991: 197).

2. Italy: One sainted monk, Nilus or Neilos of Rossano, a town in east-central Calabria, inland from the W coast of the Gulf of Taranto,* founded a monastery near the town in the 940s (or about 950). Under pressure from Ja'far al-Kalbi's Sicilian Arabs, whose troops were advancing well into Calabria, groups of Italo-Greek monks fled to the north. Neilos and his associates withdrew north to the safer Latin lands around 980. In 1004 he founded the monastery of Santa Maria di Grottaferrata just outside Rome. It is the only Italo-Greek monastic institution to have survived until today – the rest being Latinised in later centuries. (In the 1700s, the use of the Greek rite was re-invigorated by the immigration to Italy of Albanians; hence the term 'Italo-Albanian Catholic Church' is sometimes used today. The liturgical language, however, is Greek.)

(*) According to the anonymous hagiographer who wrote the Life of St Neilos in the 1020s, it was common knowledge that *of all the towns in Calabria, only Rossano had never been sacked by the Arabs* (van Falkenhausen in Magdalino 2003: 143). To quote: "the only city which, in the general devastation of the Calabrian region and the consequent fall of all the other cities under Saracen domination, did not succumb to the law of communal ruin."

3. Italy: Arabs sack Pisa – nominally part of the German Empire. First reference to Pisa in this chronology. See 1006, 1011.

1005:

1. Bulgarian West Balkans/Albania: Conventional date for the Bulgarian surrender of Durres [med. Dyrrhachium] to *Rhomania*/Byzantium: the fortress at the western end of the ancient Roman highway called the Via

Egnatia. The ruling family, the Chryselioi, switched allegiance from Samuel to Basil. (Samuel's wife was a Chryselios.)

This marked the end of a first phase in the conquest of Bulgaria, if that was indeed Basil's aim. Stephenson has proposed that Basil was ready to declare peace in 1005 and was not, at that time, seeking to annex all of Samuel's domains. Indeed he speculates that a peace treaty was actually signed (speculation is allowed because the sources are poor) (in Magdalino 2003: 117).

2. Coinage: In 1005 Basil II restored the nomisma's purity and suspended minting of the gold *tetarteron*, the lighter version of the solidus. At his death in 1025 he had amassed, it is said (by Psellus, I.19), a reserve of 14,400,000 nomismata – 200,000 *litrai* or Roman pounds of gold. Magdalino 2003: 85 doubts the veracity of this claim, but is just possible, noting that the Empire's annual budget was about six million nomismata at that time (Treadgold, *Army* p.197).

3. Venice: Plague kills the doge's son Giovanni Orseolo and his son's wife Maria Argyros, niece of Basil II (Garland, 'Zoe', www.roman-emperors.org/zoep, prefers "1006").

After 1005:

The Balkans: Little or no information has survived about the details of the ongoing war with Bulgaria.

Catherine Holmes suggests that probably fighting continued between Basil's Byzantines and Samuel's Bulgarians at a low level for most of the period between 1005 and 1014. Basil may well have raided West Bulgaria annually for some years before 1014, as Scylitzes states, but, agreeing with Holmes, Treadgold, *State* 1997: 952n, proposes that this does not mean that there was full scale warfare from 1004 to 1014.

From 1006: The Danes rule all England.

1006 (or 1005):

The Italian toe: The Pisans contributed to a Byzantine naval victory over the Arabs (probably Andalusians) off Reggio.

1006-07:

Italy: "*Anno 1006. descendit Xyphea Catepanus mense Iulij. – Anno 1007. defunctus est praedictus Catepanus in Civitate Bari*" (Lupus). – 'The catepan [Alexios] Xiphias arrives in July 1006; the aforementioned catepan dies [is killed?] in the town of Bari in 1007'.

In July 1006 a new Byzantine catepan reached Bari: Alexios Xiphias. The Italian chronicles call him "Xiphea" or "Siphea". This senior official probably replaced Gregory Tarchaneiotes, who was still catepan in 1004. Xiphias's period of service was short. He died the following year and was replaced by the patrikios John Kourkouas (Lat. *Curcua*), thitherto strategos [commander] of the theme of Samos.

2. NW Syria: The *doux* of Antioch, Nikephoros marched north-west from

Antioch to Sarudj in the Diyar Mudar – near Assyrian Edessa: the region of which Harran was the chief town – the western part of northern Mesopotamia (Jazira). There he won a victory over an Arab dervish insurrectionist called al-Acfar and his Bedouin allies the Banu Noumeir and the Banu Kilab (Holmes 2005: 349, citing Yahya: see next).

3. fl. Yahya [John] of Antioch [Yahya b. Sa'id Al-Antaki], Melkite or dyophysite Orthodox doctor, author of the *History of the Alexandrian Patriarchs*. Antioch, under Byzantine rule, was dominated by the officially sanctioned 'Greek' orthodox church.

1007: d. al-Hamadhani, Persian-born Arab writer, called the "wonder of the age". Prose fiction: short tales in rhymed prose.

Persia at this time was divided between Mahmud's 'Ghaznavid' empire (east and north) and the Buyids (south). Cf 1104 (al-Hariri).

1008:

1. Emperor Basil II turns 50.

2. Italy: Formerly the [strategos](#) of [Samos](#), the new catepan of Italy was John Curcuas [Gk Kourkouas], known in Italian as *Giovanni Antipati da Cusira*, from his court title 'anthypatos' (which was a rank above patrikios*). He arrived at [Bari](#) in May [1008](#) as a replacement for [Alexius Xiphias](#), who had been killed in battle the previous year. See 1009-10.

(*) See J B Bury, 1911: *The Imperial Administrative System of the Ninth Century*. Oxford University Publishing, pp. 28-29.

3. Bagrat III unites Abasgia and Iberia: the '[Georgians](#)', as they are now to be called, form a unified kingdom. See 1016.

1009:

Italy: Saracens occupy Cosenza in Byzantine Calabria. "*Mense Augusti apprehenderunt Sarraceni Civitatem Cosentiam rupto foedere nomine Cayti Sati*" (Lupus): 'In August the Saracens lay hold of the town of Cosenza, the treaty/agreement in the name of the *caid* Satus being broken (*rupto*)'.

In August 1009, the disorder caused by the Lombard 'patriot' Melus (see below: 1009-10) had probably already started (in May), and a *caid* (qa'id, 'governor'), named as 'Sat' or 'Sato', probably Saïd, benefitted from the confused state of affairs by violating the truce with the Greeks, and again seized Cosenza, the strongest and safest town in all of Calabria. Most probably this chief had made an alliance with the Longobard insurrectionists (see 1009-10). —Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine* II: 10, citing Lupus and Cedrenus; and Von Falkenhausen in Magdalino, *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, 2003, p.153, also citing Lupus.

2. The Balkans: The Byzantines defeat Tsar Samuel near Thessalonica.

3. The Fatimid ruler orders the destruction of Christian churches in Jerusalem. Al-Hakim, who was perhaps unfairly regarded as demented, also persecuted

Jews. See next; and cf 1048: rebuilding of the Anastasis church (Holy Sepulchre).

1009-10:

1. The East: The Muslim Egyptian (Fatimid) ruler Hakim took a number of steps to curtail the influence of the Melkite (*dyophysite* or "orthodox") Church in his domains: he confiscated the properties of his Melkite mother; annulled many of the endowments of the Church; arranged for the assassination of his uncle, the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria; and ordered the *destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem* [Gk: Naos tis Anastaseos: Church of the Resurrection] (28 September 1009). This event was witnessed by a young Byzantine called Lazaros, the future St Lazaros of Mt Galesion. Hakim was not so much intent on eradicating the Melkite church as appealing to the anti-Melkite *monophysite* Coptic majority in Egypt in order to rally their support (Shaban p.209).

The Church would be rebuilt in the period 1028-48 with funds supplied by the Empire.

2. Italy: First **revolt of the Lombards** under *Mele*, *Melo* or Melus of Bari.

On 9 May 1009 an insurrection erupted in Bari against the Catepanate of Italy, the regional Byzantine authority which was based at Bari. Led by one Melus of Bari, a local Lombard of high standing, it quickly spread to other towns.

A great battle was fought nearby at 'Bitetto' (or Bitecto; modern Bitonto). In spite of the testimony of the Byzantine writers (Cedrenus and Glycas)—who admit that their forces were beaten, massacred outright, few being taken prisoners and a few achieving safety by a headlong escape—it does not seem that fortune on this particular day entirely favoured the leader of the Longobard national party, because the Annals of Bari concede that many of the Lombard inhabitants of the town fell on the field of the combat. — Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine* II: 10; my translation: MO'R.

Late in 1009 or early the next (1010), the catepan, John Curcuas/Kourkouas, was killed in battle. In March 1010, his successor, Basil Argyrus Mesardonites, disembarked with reinforcements and immediately besieged the rebels in Bari. The Greek citizens of the town negotiated with Basil and forced the Lombard leaders, Melus and his brother-in-law Dattus, to flee. Basil entered the city on 11 June 1011 and reestablished Byzantine authority.

Chronicle of Lupus: "*Anno 1010. obiit Curcua, & descendit Basilius Catepanus cum Macedonibus mense Martij et Syllistus incendit multos homines in Civitate Trani. – Cod. Andr. Eodem anno 1010. Langobardia rebellavit à Caesare opera Melo Ducis: isque accurrens proeliatu est Botunti contra Barenses ubi ipsi obierunt et Ismaël proeliatu est cum Graecis in Monte Pelusio ubi peremptus est Dux*". – 'Kourkouas [the catepan] died and the (new) catepan Basil (Mesardonites) arrived with (a force of) Macedonians in March. Syllistus [presumably a lesser commander] burned or set on fire many people in the town of Trani [on the coast above Bari].'

As another chronicle records: "Langobardia rebelled . . . *due to the work of the leader Melus*: and he running off, made battle at Bitonto [just west of

Bari] against the men of Bari, where they [the Bariots] died. Ishmael [another name for Melus] made battle with the Greeks at Montepeloso [inland], where the *doux* or duke [i.e. Kourkouas] was killed." –

The *Chronicon Barensis* records that "Ismaël" (Melus) made war "in Monte Pelusio" with the Greeks in 1011 and [later] captured "Pasiano" [i.e. Leo Passianos the Excubitor: see below under 1016-17]. See next.

The Revolt of the Lombard-Italians under Melus, 1009-11

On 9 May 1009 a rebellion began in Bari, led by a 'Lombard noble' Melo or Melus of Bari, also called "Ishmael", and it quickly spread to other towns (Davis et al. 1973: 42; NCMH IV: 95). *The Byzantine officials were ejected from Bari*. John Curcuas did not live long enough to see the final culmination (50 years later) of these minor insurrections: the Norman domination of the entire Mezzogiorno. He was killed in battle with the rebels in either late 1009 or early 1010 (Lupus says in 1010).

Melus and his brother in law Dattus led rebels to take first Bari in 1009, then Ascoli and Trani in 1010. 1009 – A hard and snowy winter, plague, scarcity, a terrible disease of the cattle and heavy taxes push the population of Ascoli, NW of Melfi, to rebel against the Byzantine authorities. The catepan John Curcuas is killed.

Led by Melus, a local 'Lombard'(*) of high standing, the revolt quickly spread from Bari to other towns. Late in 1009 or early the next, 1010, the catepan, John Curcuas, was killed in battle.

(*) Noting that his son bore the Greek name Argyrus (the surname of Melus' wife), some have argued that Melus was a member of the local Byzantine governing class. The family, or at least the father, was originally Armenian (Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, Cambridge 1997: 9) or perhaps part-Arab (if we follow William of Apulia: hence Melus' nickname Ishmael). So perhaps we should call him an 'Italian-born Armeno-Greek'.

"Cod. Andr. Eodem anno 1010. – Langobardia rebellavit à Caesare opera Melo Ducis isque accurrens proeliatu est Botunti contra Barenses ubi ipsi obierunt et Ismaël [another name for Melus] proeliatu est cum Graecis in Monte Pelusio ubi peremptus est Dux". – 'Longobardia has rebelled, the work of the Caesar (?) Melus: of the leader: and he, hastening/charging, battle is fought at Bitonto [inland from coastal Bari] against the Bariots, where they themselves go over or go to meet (to him)], (and Melus) [and] battle is given with the Greeks in Montepeloso where the leader (dux) is destroyed [or thwarted]' (Lupus). – My poor translation (MO'R).

In March 1010 (the date in Lupus) Curcuas's successor Basil Argyrus Mesardonites disembarked with reinforcements and immediately besieged the rebels in the town. As noted, the Greek citizens of the town negotiated with Basil and forced the Lombard leaders, Melus and his brother-in-law Dattus, to flee. Basil entered the town on 11 June 1011 and reestablished imperial-Romanic authority.

Meles probably came from the Armenian community in Bari. Despite, or perhaps because of, his Armenian ancestry, it seems that he stressed his Lombard 'nationality'. He led a local anti-Greek pro-Lombard conspiracy against the catepan or governor-general John Curcuas. Meles' exact motives are not clear, but it may be that he was trying to obtain the office of duke of Bari or some other town, i.e. instead of a Greek official sent from Constantinople, or even the post of catepan itself (von Falkenhausen in Magdalino 2003: 147, 155).

In 1011 the new catepan Basil Mesardonites led an army to quell the rising which included units of Varangians who Leo of Ostia calls 'Dani, Rossi and *Gualani*' (Danes, Russians and Wends*) (quoted in Benediktz, *Varangians*, 2007 edn. Cambridge, p.51). Basil besieged Bari and bribed a number of the 'Greek' inhabitants to open the town gates to his troops (June 1011). Melus fled to Salerno; his wife and son were taken as hostages to Constantinople (Norwich, *Normans* p.15).

(*) The forms *Guandali* and *Uandali* occur in other chronicles under 1025 and 1027: see there. This is almost certainly the medieval Latin name for the Wends, the Slavs living what is now NE Germany, used for example by Godfrey of Viterbo, fl AD 1170: "'*Guandali*' dicuntur *Sclavi in Latino, in lingua vero Theotonica 'Guinidi'*": 'The 'Guandali' are called Slavs in Latin, (and) in the true German tongue 'Guinidi'. Likewise William of Rubruck, fl. 1270, called the Wends 'Vandals'.

Other less likely candidates are the Alans and the Cumans. The Alans were sometimes called *Halani*. Various websites claim that the Germans called the Cumans *Vallani*, but I find no confirmation of this in the German Wikipedia.

In Italian *gualani* can mean 'slavers', 'labourers (ploughmen)' and/or 'cattlemen' and 'sheep-boys'.

The revolt was quickly suppressed (1011) by Curcuas's successor Basil Mesardonites, possibly with support from a fleet led by Basil Argyrus, the strategus of Samos. Bari was recovered after a two-month siege. Melus escaped to Capua, but his wife and son were sent as hostages to Constantinople (von Falkenhausen, loc.cit.). See 1017.

1009-1014:

A period not well recorded in the surviving sources; thus details of the continuing Byzantine-Bulgarian war are obscure. Skylitzes says only that Basil raided Bulgaria annually for some some years before 1014, but this may be an exaggeration (Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp.69-71).

1009-18:

Italy: Urban uprisings in Imperial Apulia. The result was that the mainly Latin or 'Lombard'-populated Apulian towns gained a degree of autonomy.

As already noted, a nobleman or magnate named Meles, Melo or Melus of the Italian 'city' of Bari rebelled (1009), in an attempt, as it appears, to create

an independent republic. Melus and his brother-in-law Dattus rebelled in [1009](#) and quickly took Bari itself. In [1010](#), they took [Ascoli](#) and [Troina](#), but the new [catepan](#), [Basil Mesardonites](#), gathered a large army, and on [11 June 1011](#) Bari was recovered for the empire. Melus fled to the protection of Prince [Guaimar III of Salerno](#).

(9 May 1009): As we have seen, a Lombard revolt led by Melus (Melo) against the Byzantines breaks out in Bari. It soon spreads to other towns in Apulia.
(Late in 1009): As noted, John Curcuas, the East-Romanic catepan of Apulia, is killed in battle with Lombard rebels. Some sources place this in early 1010.

Six years later revolts would break out again (see 1016), after Meles had built an alliance of outside protagonists who included the Lombard rulers of Capua-Beneventum, and a motley assortment of Norman mercenaries and pilgrims. Together they will defeat (1016: see there) a Byzantine army led by the catepan Contoleo Tornicius or [Leo Tornikios Kontoleon](#).

1009-26:

Ottone or Otto Orseolo, doge of Venice 1009-26, a god-son of the German emperor Otto III, was suspected of wishing to bring the state under *Western* imperial domination, but in the event he died an exile at Constantinople.

Ottone was banished in [1026](#); he found a refuge in Constantinople, where he remained until his death (1032).

Basil Argyrus Mesardonites

Basil Argyrus Mesardonites was strategos of Samos, then catepan of Italy from 1010 to 1016. Alternatively, if we follow Holmes (2011: www.roman-emperors.org/basilii), there were two Basils, namely Basil Argyrus at Samos (a naval commander who aided the other Basil) and the unrelated Basil Mesardonites (land commander in Italy).

But if there was just one, the catepan may have been a member of the imperial family of the Argyroi and perhaps even a brother of Romanos III. Wortley (notes to Skylitzes p.330, citing Vannier) says he was the brother of Maria Argyropoulina [d. ca 1007]. He arrived in Bari in 1010, in the middle of the anti-Byzantine revolt of Melo of Bari, in the course of which the catepan Curcuas had been killed. After a long and hard siege, loyalists within the town ousted the rebels and handed over the town (11 June 1011): many natives of Bari were killed, while the leaders of the rebels, Melo and Datto, as we have seen, managed to escape.

Basil took to Romania (Byzantium) as prisoners Melo's wife Maralda and their 11 years old son Argyrus (his mother probably being a distant relative of the noble family of that name).^{*} In order to assure the fidelity of the Catepanate of Italy to the empire, expressions of loyalty to the emperor were required of prince Guaimario III of Salerno (October 1011) and Atenolfo, Abbot of Monte Cassino and brother of Pandolfo IV, prince of Capua. Basil thereby succeeded in expelling the fugitive Datto, who was forced to leave the safety of the Benedictine abbey and find escape in the lands of the Pope.

To Basil Mesardonites can be attributed the construction, or the restoration and the widening, of the Palace of the Catepano at Bari, located where the

Basilica of Saint Nicholas now stands (source: http://wapedia.mobi/it/Basilio_Argiro_il_Mesardonite; accessed 2011).

(*) See under 'Argyros' in *Foundation for Medieval Genealogy* – http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/BYZANTIUM.htm#_ftn1567.

1010-11:

Italy: As noted earlier, in March 1010 the new catepan Basil Argyros Mesardonites, (probably) hitherto strategos of Samos, disembarked with a large force from [Constantinople](#) and a fleet commanded by [Leo Tornikios Kontoleon](#), the *strategos* of [Cephalonia](#).

The status of the men sent to govern S Italy shows the importance attached to their Italian domains by the emperors of this period. Basil was apparently a member of, or closely related to, the imperial family of Argyros. Holmes per contra (2005: 190) says Skylitzes conflates two different Basils: the catepan Basil Mesardonites (not one of the Argyroi, she thinks) and Basil Argyros, the strategos of Samos.

Basil immediately besieged the rebels in [Bari](#). This lasted two months. The Greek citizens of the town negotiated with him and forced the Lombard leaders, Melus and [Dattus](#), to flee to Ascoli and then Benevento. Basil entered Bari on [11 June 1011](#) and reestablished East-Roman authority. See next.

"Anno 1010. obiit Curcua, & descendit Basilius Catepanus cum Macedonibus mense Martii, et Syllistus incendit multos homines in Civitate Trani" (Lupus): 'Kourkouas dies and the (new) catepan Basil [Mesardonites] arrives *with* (his) *Macedonians* in March; and Syllistus [a person otherwise unknown] burns many people in the town of Trani'.

The protection of Apulia, and with it the Adriatic coast, had a higher priority than the defence of Calabria, and von Falkenhausen (in Magdalino 2003: 152) notes the continuous presence in Byzantine Langobardia of officers of the various Tagmata, the *Scholai*, the *Hikanatoi* and the *Exkoubitoi*. We may guess that they were not there on their own commanding local troops but probably brought with them from Constantinople a small detachment of the Tagmata (perhaps as few as 200 men: that being a tagma's smallest subunit, the *bandon*). Cf entry for 1041: on occasion larger detachments of the Tagmata did serve in Italy.

1011:

1a. Italy: Rebellious Bari is besieged for 61 days according to the *Annales Barenses*. The catepan Basil Argyros Mesardonites enters Bari (*11 June*) after the Greek inhabitants of the town arrange for its surrender. As we have said, the Lombard leaders, Melus and his brother in law Dattus, manage to escape. Basil sends the family of Melus as hostages to Constantinople but makes no reprisals against the Latins (Lombards) in Bari.

1b. (Oct): Basil Mesardonites conducts a progress through Lombard territory.

He visited [Salerno](#) in October, where [Prince Guaimar III](#) was nominally a Byzantine vassal (Loud 2000: 37). He then moved on to [Monte Cassino](#) in the Principality of Capua-Benevento, the monastery that was sheltering Dattus on its lands. He successfully demands that Abbot Atenulf stop sheltering the fugitive Dattus on monastery property. When Basil confirms Monte Cassino's privileges on land in *East-Romanic* territory, Dattus is forced to flee again, taking shelter in papal territory.

2. Spanish Muslims again sack Pisa. See 1015.

1012 and 1013

. . . were quiet years for the empire. Partly this reflected a reluctance on Basil's part to wage war, which Treadgold, 1997: 525, calls near apathy.

1014:

1. The Caucasus: Having warned George (*Georgi*) of Abasgia-Georgia to stay out of David's former princedom, Basil sent an imperial army to crush Iberian (Georgian) resistance in 1014. This army was decisively defeated.

Thus Aristakes Lastivertc'i, the Armenian chronicler: "Bagarat, [Bagrat III] of Abkhazia, died and his son, Georgi, succeeded him [1014-1027]. The emperor Basil sent him an edict which read as follows: "Abandon [those territories] *which I gave to your father* out of the Curopalate's [David's] portion as a gift, and be prince solely over your patrimony." But [Georgi] did not consent to this; rather, taking pride in his youth [aged about 16], he wrote a contrary reply: "I shall not give anyone even one single House [from the territory] over which my father held sway". Now when the emperor heard this, he sent an army to forcibly master the land. The braves of Tayk' [Tao: SW Georgia] came forth to resist [this army] near the great Uxtik'awan, and they put the East-Roman army to flight, but in no way did they harm the city [town] or other cultivated places. Yet this was the beginning of the destruction of the House of Tayk'." Aristakes, at <http://rbedrosian.com/alint.htm>; accessed 2005.

2. Pope vs Patriarch: To the anger of Constantinople, Rome adopted the inclusion of "Filioque" in the Nicene Creed: *Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum, et vivificantem: qui ex Patre [Filioque] procedit*. That is: "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and giver of life, who from the Father [*and from the Son*] proceeds." This is the so-called 'double procession', a heresy in the eyes of most in the East, for no direct statement about the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son is found in the New Testament. Use of *filioque* had been a point of hot dispute between West and East for many centuries. It was a Gothic-Frankish-German innovation that Rome itself for long avoided.

The dispute was one element in the Great Schism, in which Rome broke with Constantinople. The date for the schism is commonly given as "1054", but in truth only a few prelates were involved at first. Christendom at large did not perceive that there was a schism until much later. It is best to see the West-East schism as the slow result of the Crusades (from 1096), the Massacre of the Latins in Constantinople 1182, the Latin capture and sack of Constantinople in 1204, and the imposition of Latin Patriarchs in the Byzantine East.

The Filioque was declared to be a dogma of Latin faith in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council.

1014: Henry II, last of the Saxon emperors of Germany, was crowned in Rome by Pope Benedict. Cf 1016.

1014-18:

CONQUEST OF 'WESTERN BULGARIA', i.e. the realm that comprised our Albania, FYROM and west Bulgaria.

Marching from Macedonia, Basil launches a further campaign against the Bulgarians: victory at or near Cimbalongus or *Campu lungu*, NW of Serres, inland from Thessalonica (1014). This was followed by several *mass blindings* of defeated Bulgarian troops and the death of Samuel (source: Skylitzes, 349).

Basil then advances (1015) further west to the enemy capital Ohrid, where he wins a major victory and sacks the town. In the north, Serdica (modern Sofia) was besieged and taken in 1016.

"Bulgaria, long the only power in the Balkans that rivalled Byzantium, had utterly collapsed": Treadgold 1997: 528.

Gibbon: "The final destruction of the kingdom of Bulgaria appears, since the time of Belisarius [the Byzantine re-conqueror of Old Rome in AD 536], *the most important triumph of Roman arms . . .*" (Decline, ch.48, p.231). This, we believe, is too generous: we rather think that emperor Heraclius, fl. AD 627, did a little better, albeit that his triumphs were more ephemeral: *cherchez-y qui veut . . .*



Above: The region in which the Battle of the Kleidion Pass was fought.

Basil's army proceeded from Serrai/Serres NW, then N, past Sidhirokastron into the Pass. The plain of Irakleia or "Campu lungu" lies to the immediate SW of Sidhirokastron. As can be seen, the present-day border intersection point of FYROM, Greece and Bulgaria lies west of Petrich.

The Battle of Kleidion or Belasitsa or Campu-lungu, 1014

The Battle of Kleidion or Clidium, "the little key", or the Battle of *Belasitsa*, took place on 29 [July 1014](#).

The *plain* was called Campu lungu, and the *pass* was called Kleidion or "little key", while the key *mountain*, or rather mountain range, was the Belasitsa, medieval "Belasica" (Stephenson 2003a: 3; Skylitzes trans. Wortley pp.330-31).

The Belasitsa or Belasica Range runs west to east, with the town of Strumica or Stroumitsa near its western end, and Petrich near the eastern end. Thus the plain of 'Campu-lungu' ["long plain", Greekified as *kimbalonga*] would seem to have been the plain around Irakleia in present-day Greece, south of Petrich, NW of Serres. Haldon 2001: 107 rightly identifies it as the river-valley of the Strymon, i.e. east of Kerkini Lake.

Mt Belasitsa of that name is located near the border-point of present-day Bulgaria, Greece and FYROM. The modern-day town of Petrich lies *just inside our Bulgaria*. The pass itself, according to Haldon 2001: 107, was near the modern village of Kljuc/Kljuch.

Basil attacked from the front plain in our Greece (the south), while Nicephorus Xiphias, the *strategos* of [Philippopolis](#), took other troops westwards and then north or NW through the range past Mt Belasitsa (or more likely, east of Mt Radomir*) and ambushed the Bulgarians from behind, trapping them in the defile.

(*) Mt Radomir [Greek *Kerkini*: 2,029 or 2,031 metres] was apparently named after the Bulgarian prince, Gavril Radomir, Samuel's son, who took part in the battle of Kleidion (Wikipedia 2011, 'Radomir peak'). It is the nearest highpoint to the Pass (about 15 km away), whereas Mt Belasitsa itself is plainly too far west (about 25 km), very close to the modern three-way national border-point. One pictures Xiphias's men climbing through one of the gorges that run up the range broadly in the direction of Petrich, before turning west to attack (see map earlier).

In Skylitzes the battle is described thus:

"Knowing that the emperor always made his incursions through [the **plain** known as] *Campu Lungu* and [the **pass** known as] *Kleidion* ('the key'), he [Samuel] undertook to fortify the difficult terrain to deny the emperor access. A wall [Gk *phragmon*: timber palisade, fence] was built across the whole width [of the pass] and worthy defenders were committed to it to stand against the emperor. When he [Basil] arrived and made an attempt to enter [Bulgaria], the [Bulgarian] guards defended the wall manfully and bombarded and wounded the [imperial] attackers from above.

When the emperor had thus despaired of gaining passage, Nikephoros Xiphias, the *strategos* of Philippopolis, met with the emperor and urged him to stay put and continue to assault the wall, while, as he explained, he turned back with his men and, heading round *to the south of* [sic: ?west of] Kleidion through rough and trackless country, crossed [over/past] the very high **mountain** [sic: mountain range] known as *Belasica*.

On 29 July in the twelfth indiction [1014], they [Xiphias and his men] descended suddenly on the Bulgarians, *from behind* and screaming battle cries. Panic stricken by the sudden assault, [the Bulgarians] turned to flee, while the emperor broke [from the other side] through the abandoned wall. Many [Bulgarians] fell and many more were captured; *Samuel barely escaped from danger with the aid of his son*, who fought nobly against his attackers, placed him on a horse, and made for the fortress known as Prilep" (Skylitzes, tr. Wortley, pp. 330-1).

Prilep is west of Strumica, in today's south-central FYROM, the 'Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia'.

Strumica, west of Petrich, is located in the south-eastern part of FYROM (see map above). The Church of St Leontius in Vodocha on the western outskirts of Strumica, from the 11th century, is the most famous local historical monument. The locals say that Vodocha means 'poking eyes': *vadi-ochi*. The legend states that it was here that the '14,000' soldiers were blinded by the Byzantine Emperor Basil II (thus various FYROM websites).

Skylitzes again: "And so, having taken his soldiers . . . , all of a sudden, with cries and noise, he [Xiphias] appeared on high ground *in the rear of* the Bulgarians. Terrified by his sudden appearance, they fled. The Emperor destroyed the abandoned palisade and *began to pursue them*. Many were slain and many more were captured. Samuil was barely saved from death by his son, who valiantly warded off the attackers. He put him on a horse and led him [west] to the fortress called *Prilep*. And the Emperor blinded the captive Bulgarians, about 15,000 *so they say*, ordering each group of 100 to be led by a soldier with one eye, and thus sent them to Samuil. When the latter saw them coming in rows of equal numbers he could not stand this suffering courageously and in silence, but became unwell, fainted and fell to the ground."

The blinding of up to "14 or 15,000"* of their troops in 1014 is said, inaccurately, to have effectively crippled the Bulgarians; it may imply that they had begun with an enrolled army strength of over 25,000. Treadgold offers as a guess **"33,000" men**: *Army* p.84.

Stephenson: "Such a large number [14,000] has to be questioned, although an independent source of the same period, Kekaumenos, provides some corroboration. We know that the Bulgarians fought on for four more years, so their forces cannot have been so depleted. Moreover, Skylitzes qualifies his own account with the aside "they say" (*phasi*), which is an indication that the huge figure was drawn from a popular story and was subject to scrutiny even by contemporaries."- Paul Stephenson, <http://homepage.mac.com/paulstephenson/trans.html>; accessed 2011; also his paper in Magdalino ed. 2003: 131.

Judith Herrin 2007: 218 goes further, arguing that the blindings were "mythical". She proposes that Samuel's death in 1014 was a convenient peg on which later writers could hang a tale of mass blindings. She sees Kleidon as a second-rank battle, not a decisive event, and emphasises that the epithet 'Bulgar-Slayer' was not coined in Basil's lifetime. Moreover it is hard to see that the defence of one defile would require 15,000 men.

For Stephenson the true number is less important than the fact that Basil was *believed* to have blinded many hundreds of men (ibid.).

1015:

1. West Balkans: Ohrid was besieged by Basil in 1015, but probably only taken in 1018 (Vlasto 1970: 181). The administrative capital of Byzantine (western) Macedonia was, however, fixed at Skopje, where the governor resided.

Kalbid Sicily: With the help of Berbers and black slaves, the emir Jafar's brother Ali b. Yusuf rose in revolt. Ali was defeated and executed. Increased taxation thereafter led to a further uprising in Palermo in 1019 (Ahmad p.32).

1015-16: The Emir of Denia [Spain], Mujahid al-Amiri, sets out (1015) from his base in the Balearic Islands with a fleet of 125 ships in an attempt to conquer Sardinia. He is dislodged (1016) from Sardinia by a force from Genoa and Pisa.

The Pisans and Genoese battle with Spanish (Majorcan) Moors for control of Corsica and Sardinia. (The Sardinians, or at least the ruling caste, had still written in Greek/*Rhomaïke* in the 900s: Runciman 1963: 198.) Cf 1016, next.

This naval victory of Pisa and Genoa pushes the Muslims out of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

1015-1018:

Present-day Albania: Iwan (Ivan) Wladislaw or John Vladislav, *last Tsar of West Bulgaria*. Killed at Durres (Dyrrhachium) 1018, after which Bulgaria became a Byzantine province (Curta 2006: 246). See 1018.

1016:

1. Syria: The Fatimids break their truce with Byzantium and briefly occupy Aleppo (Holmes 2005: 307).

2. West Bulgaria: Basil captures Serdica/Sofia after a siege of 88 days.

The sequence of events in the Bulgarian war is unclear. Catherine Holmes (2005: 415) notes that the first positive sign that Byzantine armies had reoccupied eastern Bulgaria and taken the Byzantine frontier back up to the Danube comes as late as 1016, with Scylitzes's identification of Tzotzicius, a

Georgian in imperial service, as *strategus* of the East-Romanic **theme of Paristrion** (Paradunavum) with his HQ at Dristra on the Lower Danube.

3. Crimea: (Or in 1017): An East-Roman fleet is sent against the Khazars. Emperor Basil II sends a fleet commanded by admiral Andronikos Mongos against the Khazars in Crimea, or that part of around the entrance to the Sea of Azov.* With Rus aid, the admiral captures the Khazar leader (GK *archon*), George Tsulus (Georgios Tzulos: Szulus, Tzul or Toulos), and the East-Romans regain the fortress of Bospor and the nearby town of Kerch.

Cedrenus [II col. 128: Latin version quoted by Cawley] records that, after returning to Constantinople in January 1024, Emperor Basileios II sent forces "in Chatzariam" [to 'Khazaria', meaning our Crimea] commanded by "duce Mongo Andronici duce Lydi filio" [doux Mongos Andronikos, son of the doux of Lydia] who, with the help of "Sphengo fratre Bladimeri, eius qui Basilii imperatoris sororem in matrimonio habebat" [with Sphengus the brother of Vladimir, Basil's brother in law***], subjugated the region and captured "principe eius Georgio Szulo" [their prince George Tzul].

(*) In Greek 'mongos' means 'the hoarse'. The Khazars, now reduced to a minor power, held part of the top or NE coast of the Black Sea SE of the Crimea. There was (first mention is in 1022) a Russian colony** or outpost at Tmutarakan at the entrance to the Sea of Azov, i.e. on the *eastern* side the Strait of Kerch. It separated Byzantine Crimea from the Khazarian Caucasus. The town of Kerch lies on the *western* side of the strait. As it appears, some time before 1016 the Khazars attacked westwards and took control of Tmutarakan, Kerch and Bospor.

(**) The whole hinterland, the Ukrainian steppe SE of Kiev, was held by the pagan Patzinaks.

(***) Vladimir, prince of Kiev, had married Basil's older sister Anna.

4. In the north-east: the Georgians defeat a strong imperial army. See 1021.

Italy. 1021: Pope Benedict VIII participates in a sea battle against Saracen marauders.

The Saracens (Andalusis) had seized Luna in Tuscany and from this base were spreading misery over the land. Benedict attacked them by land and by sea and drove them out of northern Italy. He succeeded in getting the Genoese and Pisans to sail against Sardinia, the Muslim base. The combined fleets captured the island.

"Lombard" Apulia under the Byzantines

Stranieri 2000: 340 notes that Latin Christianity and Germanic (Lombard) law prevailed down to Bari but were found less and less the further south one went. South of Lecce, finally, in the Gallipoli-Otranto sector, those following Romano-Byzantine or 'Greek' customs became quite numerous, although *not a majority even there*.

On the linguistic plane, the northern Apulian dialects were influenced by or

similar to the neo-Romance of the 'Neapolitan' type, with the region of Taranto and Brindisi less influenced; while the lower Salentine Romance dialects, says Stranieri, conserved "all" the characteristics of Late Antique speech.

Wickham p.157 likewise contrasts the Greek culture of Calabria with the mainly 'Latin' customs, culture and speech of Byzantine-ruled Apulia. In Apulia the *East-Romanics* used the Lombard aristocracy as their officials and local administrators; only the top rulers, the catepan and the *strategoi* [provincial military commanders] under him, were invariably Greek. Lombard law was the most common law professed in town charters in Apulia, rather than Greek or Roman law. And, unlike in Calabria, Lombard (Germanic) names far outnumbered Greek ones, even in the coastal towns of Apulia.

The urban revolts sometimes led by the Lombard aristocracy were not usually in favour of rule by Lombard Benevento or Salerno. Rather, says Wickham, they were ad hoc hostile responses to or violent protests against individual administrators and to the continuing effectiveness of East-Roman (Byzantine) government, reflected for example in the efficient levying of taxes.

Meles' Second Revolt, 1016-18:

Italy: Meles first built an alliance of outside protagonists, namely the Lombard rulers of Capua-Beneventum and a motley assortment of **Norman** mercenaries and pilgrims. Having assembled at Capua, his rebels invaded Apulia. Together they (*probably*) defeated (22 June 1017) a Byzantine army led by the new *katepano* Leo 'Contoleo' Tornicius (Kontoleon Tornikios)*, or so Leo of Ostia has it. William of Apulia (pro-Norman) records the result as indecisive; Lupus Protospatharius and the anonymous chronicler of Bari (pro-Byzantine) record the battle as a defeat for the rebels.

In any event imperial reinforcements arrived in December 1017, led by a further new catepan, Basil Boioannes ["bo-yo-annes"]**, called in Latin *Bugianus*. Meles was soon defeated: see 1018.

(*) Tornikios was his family name; while 'Kontoleon' means "Little Leo", a nickname referring to his short stature.

(**) Possibly of Bulgarian descent. 'Boioannes' [Boiwnnhz] may well be the Byzantinised form of a Bulgarian name, *Bajan* or *Bojan* (Von Falkenhausen in Magdalino, *Year 1000* p.148).

Melus returned to Italy in 1016, gained the renewed support of the Lombard dukes and the dissident towns, and enlisted some Norman mercenary horse-soldiers, who thereby made *their first appearance on the Italian political scene*. Together they moved from Capua towards Capitanata (northern Puglia). Thanks to some initial successes - at Arenula or Arènola near the Fortore River, then Civitate, and Vaccarizza near Troia in the spring of 1017, - Melus opened the road (ancient highway) to Trani. But then a decisive clash with Byzantine troops led by the new catepano Basil Boioannes took place at Cannae (west of Barletta) on 1 October 1018 where *the rebels were crushed*.

According to the poet and chronicler William of Apulia, the first encounter between the Normans, military adventurers from Normandy, and the local population took place in the Gargano in N Apulia in 1016 and involved a group of Norman pilgrims and Melus (or Melo) of Bari, who led a revolt against the Byzantine authorities.

Approximately 40 Norman horse-soldiers came on pilgrimage to St. Michael's shrine, a cave on the Gargano peninsula in Apulia. While at the shrine, they encountered Melus, a Lombard from Bari dedicated to the cause of Lombard independence (or perhaps his own elevation to ruler of the Lombards).

Melus wore **a turban** (Latin *mitra*): "they saw a man clad in the Greek manner, called Melus. They were amazed at the peculiar costume of this stranger, one which they had never seen before, with *his head tied up in a bonnet wrapped around it*" (William of Apulia, I.ii).

In William's original Latin: '*More virum Graeco vestitum, nomine Melum, exulis ignotam vestem capitique ligato insolitos mitrae mirantur adesse rotatus*': "clothed in the Greek fashion, a man called Melus, and they are surprised (amazed) at the garment (*vestem*) in the form of an unaccustomed headress (*mitra*: turban, headband, coif) appearing tied (*ligato*: bound) around (*rotatus*) the head of the strange exile (wanderer)".

Melus invites the Normans to join forces with the Lombards to fight the 'Greeks'. The Normans return to Normandy to recruit others. The following year, 1017, a small army of Normans arrives at Capua to join with Melus and his army (Norwich 1967).

A band of some 250 Normans including the future count Rainulf Drengot (see 1030) established a stronghold at [Monte Gargano](#) in [Apulia](#), where they joined the forces of the [Lombard Melus \(Melo\) of Bari](#), who had been profiting by the conditions of virtual anarchy to rebel against his Byzantine overlords but was currently on the run.

1016-17: "... *obiit Butunti Mesardoniti Catepanus, et mense Novembris [1016] interfectus est Leo frater Argiri, et descendit Turnichi Catepanus mense Maij [1017], et fecit proelium cum Melo et Normannis. Leo Patianus Exubitus iterum mense Iulij 22 die proelium fecit praedictus Turnichius Catepanus, et vicit Melum et Normannos, et mortuus est Patianus ibi.* (Lupus). - 'The catepan Basil Mesardonites dies at Bitonto [just west of Bari], and in November 1016 Leo the brother of Argyrus [and successor] is killed [assassinated]; and the (new) catepan Tornikios arrives in May 1017; and he made battle with Melus and the Normans. Leo Passianos the Excubitor* again on 22 July [1017], along with the catepan Tornikios, makes battle [at Arenula] and he (Tornikios) *defeats* Melus and the Normans, (and) there Passianos is killed.'

(*) The regiment of the Excubitors was one of the elite guards cavalry units headquartered at Constantinople. They had totalled 4,000 men in the early 900s; we may guess that only a detachment served under Passianos in 1017.

First Tornicius sent (May 1017) [Leo Passianos](#) with an army against Melus. The forces of Passianos and Melus (1): met, says William of Apulia, I:56, at Arenula, somewhere on the Fortore River NW of the Gargano peninsula. The battle was either indecisive – according to [William of Apulia](#) – or a victory for Melus if we follow [Leo of Ostia](#): he says the Byzantines lost all three encounters.

Next (2): Tornikios took personal command (June 1017), and led the imperial army into a second encounter near nearby [Civitate](#) (22 June according to Lupus). This second battle was probably a victory for Melus, though [Lupus Protospatharius](#) and the anonymous chronicler of Bari record a defeat. Passianos was killed.

Finally in July (3): a third battle, *a decisive victory for Melus and his Normans and Lombards*, was fought at *Vaccaricia* [Vaccarizza: modern Biccari], near [Troia](#), SE of Lucera and west of present-day Foggia (Schlumberger II, ch. X). Amatus says **3,000 Normans** took part; or at least that was the number who began the battle: “only 500 of the 3,000 Normans who had begun the battle remained” [trans. Dunbar & Loud 2004 p.52] (it may be implied that some of the net 2,500 died in the battle while others left during it).

The entire region from the Fortore River to [Trani](#), i.e. the whole upper third of Apulia, had fallen to Melus, and in September 1017, Tornikios was relieved of his duties in favour of [Basil Boïoannes](#) (Norwich, *Normans* p.19; Wikipedia, 2011, under ‘Leo Tornikios’). See 1018.



Above: Norman cavalryman.

1016-50:

Italy: Capua experienced a new zenith under [Pandulf IV](#), “the Wolf of the Abruzzi”, as the chronicler Aime [Amato] of Monte Cassino called him. He was deposed twice between his succession in [1016](#) and his death in [1050](#). He was originally an ally of the Byzantines and remained allied with them against all his neighbours – Gaeta, Naples, Amalfi and Salerno – until the end. See 1021.

Arab paper: The Zirid prince al-Mu'izz ibn Badis, who ruled in what is now Tunisia and eastern Algeria from 1016 to 1062, included a brief account of medieval papermaking in his book, *'Umdat al-Kuttab (The Support of Scribes)*, the only medieval work on the arts of the book to survive.

Pisa was in continuous conflict with the [Saracens](#), who had their bases in Sardinia and Corsica, for control of the Western Mediterranean. In 1017 [Sardinia](#) was captured, in alliance with [Genoa](#), by the defeat of the [Saracen](#) (Spanish) 'king' Mugahid of Denia who also ruled the Balearic Islands. *This victory gave Pisa the supremacy in the Tyrrhenian Sea.*

1017-19:

1. The Balkans: Following a further campaign in 1017-18, Basil re-enters Ochrid, makes (1018) a long diversion to visit the Parthenon church of the Mother of God in Athens (- "the Temple of Theotokos Atheniotissa", as She was later tagged) to give thanks to the Virgin for his victory, and then celebrates (1019) a triumph at Constantinople (Stephenson 2000: 76). —The Parthenon church had become a major Christian pilgrimage site from the 8th Century.

John Skylitzes says Basil's triumphal entry into Constantinople involved his leading Maria, the wife of the Bulgarian ruler John Vladislav, and the daughters of Samuel, all of whom had previously submitted to him. This much is confirmed by a contemporary, albeit geographically distant writer, Yahya of Antioch, and in a later twelfth-century synoptic account by John Zonaras.

A famous miniature, a parchment portrait in gold, of the emperor survives, shows him clothed in golden lamellar armour. It is commonly called "the triumph of Basil over the Bulgarians". The emperor stands in the battle dress of a Roman general holding in his right hand a lance and in his left a sheathed sword. He is shown wearing the crimson imperial boots, and being crowned with a *stemma* or low crown set with a red stone and a double row of pearls (Venice: Biblioteca Marciana, Cod. Marc. Gr. 17).

Some would place it earlier than 1018: see the comments by Paul Stephenson, 'A note on the portrait illumination of Basil II in his psalter', online at [://homepage.mac.com/paulstephenson/madison/byzantium/psalter.htm](http://homepage.mac.com/paulstephenson/madison/byzantium/psalter.htm); 2006: accessed 2007.

2. N Bulgaria: A Pecheneg/Patzinak army advances upon the lower Danube. The threat was averted by negotiation: Basil sent Tzotzikios 'the Iberian', i.e. Georgian, who convinced the nomads to remain north of the Danube and not to attack the empire of Bulgaria (Stephenson in Magdalino 2003: 129). It may have been a combination of gold and Basil's fearsome reputation that dissuaded them.

3. Italy: **Norman adventurers** or mercenaries join Melus's Latins (Lombards) in rebellion against the *East-Romanics* in Apulia. The first confirmed military

action by Normans in the south seems to have involved mercenaries in the employ of Melus in battle against the Greeks in *May* 1017. If so, then probably the Normans had left Normandy between January and April.

May 1017: Formerly strategos of Cephallonia, Leo Tornikios Kontoleon* – Latin: *Tornicius Condoleo* – is appointed Byzantine catepan of Apulia/Italy. Then, from *Dec 1017*: Basil Boioannes.

(*) 'Kontoleon' means 'Leo the Short'.

The catepan Tornikios sends a Byzantine army under a subordinate general Leo Passianos to the region of modern Foggia, i.e. near the 'spur' on the upper calf of the Italian boot.

Passianos (1): fights a Lombard-Norman force under Melus at Arenula on the river Fortore in N Apulia in *May or June 1017*. As we have said, the sources are contradictory about whether this battle ended in a draw or a Lombard victory.

The catepan Leo Tornikios then (2): takes personal command of the Byzantine forces. A second battle is fought on 22 *July* or 22 June near Civitate [Civitella], which probably ended in a Lombard victory, though some sources say otherwise. It was during this battle that general Leo Passianos was slain.

(3) *July or August*: As we noted earlier, a third battle was fought at Vaccaricia or Vacarizza, near Troia, also in northern Apulia, near modern Foggia, which ended in a decisive Lombard victory. The Greeks were pursued as far as Trani (i.e. half-way to Bari), according to the Chronicle of Monte Cassino. —Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine* II: 10; my translation: MO'R.

Because of his failure against the Lombard rebels, the catepan Leo Tornikios Kontoleon is recalled to Constantinople in *September*.

(Dec 1017): Emperor Basil II appoints Basil Boioannes, Latin *Basilius Bugianus*, as catepan of Apulia; he reaches Italy in December 1017. He was to be the longest serving Byzantine catepan of Italy, 1018-1028, and one of the best Byzantine generals of his time. He re-established the Eastern Empire as a major force in southern Italy after a century of decline. See below: battle at Cannae, 1018.

Lupus: "*Anno 1018*. [sic: actually December 1017*] *Indict. Prima descendit Basilius Catepanus qui et Bugianus et Abalautius* [sic] *Patricius mense Decembris, et Ligorius (c: cum) Tepoteriti fecit proelium Trani et occisus est ibi Ioannatius Protospata et Romoald captus est, et in Constantinopolim deportatus est.*" - 'In the first indiction, in December 1018 [correctly 1017*], Basil the catepan, also called Bugianus [Boioannes], arrives, and, with his [two] *topoteretes*** [deputy commanders] the *patrikios* Abalautius [recte: Abalantius***] and Ligorius, gives battle at Trani [on the coast halfway between Foggia and Bari], and there John [Johannakios] the protospatharius is killed [by the rebels], and Romoald [the rebel leader at Trani] is captured and taken away to Constantinople'.

(*) For Lupus the new year did not begin until 25 March.

(**) The rank of the second-in-charge of a Tagmatic regiment; in the

Themes the same rank was called *turmarch*. Presumably either Abalantius or Ligorius was the commander of the Varangians. (Ligorius is the name of a saint venerated in Venice.)

(***) At a guess, a relative of the Leo Abalantius, an army officer (*taxiarch*), who in 969 helped Tzimiskes murder emperor Nicephorus Phocas.

1018:

1. The Balkans: Emperor Basil (aged 60) leads an army into Thrace. This sufficed to frighten the easternmost Bulgarian fortresses into surrender, and Tsar John's widow Maria offered submission. As noted, Basil then proceeded to the enemy capital of Ochrid. The Hungarian king sent troops to aid the *East-Romanics* in this expedition.

Basil captured the Bulgarain capital Achrida (Ohrid) and divided the prisoners, now slaves, into three groups – one for himself, one for the 'Greek' (Byzantine) soldiers and another for the Varangians (or so says 'Egfroth': www.geocities.com/egfrothos/battlehonours.html; accessed 2008).

Ohrid's submission marked the **end of the 'West Bulgarian empire'**. *The Balkans would remain under Byzantine rule for 168 years.*

The famous miniature of Basil, mentioned earlier, in the frontispiece of the *Psalter of Basil*, shows him dressed in military uniform, trampling on defeated Bulgarians (or other suppliants). He wears a low crown [*stemma*], golden *lamellar body armour* over a purple tunic and *high red boots* decorated with pearls (Venice: Marcian Library; picture in Rice p.105, etc).

2. Italy: As we have noted, there were three inconclusive battles fought against Melus's rebels during 1017; then on 1 October 1018 Basil Boïoannes crushed the Lombards and Normans at Cannae in 'the **battle of the [lower] Ofanto River**'.

Boiannes, the new catepan of Italy, received reinforcements in the form of a detachment of the Varangian Guard, sent from Constantinople. At Cannae the Lombard and Norman forces under Melus and Gilbert Buatère were soundly defeated by Boiannes' troops.

The Ofanto River exits into the Adriatic in N Apulia about half-way between Foggia and Bari: closer to Foggia than to Bari. Cannae is located on its lower reaches, between Canosa di Puglia and Barletta. More specifically, Cannae is on the southern side of the Ofanto, nine km WSW of Barletta.

It is said that the imperial army massively outnumbered the rebels, but the sources are pro-Lombard (Norwich, *Normans* pp.19-20). If there really were just "250" Normans in the front line, then the rebel army under Melus may have numbered up to 1,500 men including Lombards. A Byzantine force *twice as large* as that is quite credible.

Schlumberger, II: 570: "*La lutte fut si sanglante que les habitants du pays, qui ont oublié la bataille d'Annibal, appellent encore aujourd'hui '[il] pezzo-di-sangue' la plaine où combattirent furieusement les Normands et les troupes mercenaires du basileus des Grecs.*" – 'The struggle was so bloody that the locals, who have forgotten Hannibal's battle [in the same area in BC 216], today [i.e. late 1800s] still call the plain where the Normans furiously fought

the mercenary troops of the basileus [emperor] of the Greeks, *pezzo di sangue*, "[the] field of blood'."

Amatus says that only 10 of the 250 Normans survived (Dunbar & Loud p.51).

Leo of Ostia wrote: "*When the Emperor heard that brave knights had invaded his land he sent his finest soldiers against them: in the first three battles (that) they fought the Normans won, but when they were matched against the Russians [Varangians], they were totally defeated, and their army was utterly destroyed . . .*" (quoted by Benedikt 2007: 51).

The Byzantines under the Catepan Basil Boioannes defeat (1 October 1018) the rebel Lombards and their Norman allies at the river Ofanto, four miles (six km) from the coast, near Cannae [below modern Canosa di Puglia]. The Lombard leader Melus is forced to retreat back into papal territory. *He is never able to renew the rebellion* and eventually settles at the court of Emperor Henry II at Bamberg.

Melus escaped to the protection of the Western Emperor, Henry II. The Norman leader, Gilbert, was killed at Cannae and succeeded by a survivor, Rainulfo (Rainulf) Drengot.

Boioannes then moved to defend the approaches to northern Apulia, fortifying the ancient Roman hill-town of Aecae on a great spur dominating the surrounding plains; nearby was the junction of the Via Traiana and a major road to Siponto. It was given the name of Troy or *Troia*: as in Homer. To guard its citadel he installed a garrison of his own Norman mercenaries (1019).

Thus **nearly all the south of Italy** – with the exception of the duchy of Benevento – **returned to the dominion of Romania (Byzantium)**. Boioannes forming an alliance with Pandolfo IV of Capua and his men succeeded in taking the tower on the Garigliano, to which Datto has escaped. Datto was brought to Bari and executed on 15 June 1021 (Amatus, trans. Dunbar & Loud p.53). See 1021.

After Cannae, the Normans as allies of Melus promoted immigration from Normandy; and they began to serve as mercenaries for various local 'Lombard' (Italian) lords, including Guaimar of Salerno, Pandulf of Benevento, Atenulf abbot of Montecassino, and even the Romanic-Byzantine catepan of Bari. See 1019.

Defeat of Mele or Melus and the Normans at Cannae, 1018

Lupus: "*Fecit proelium supradictus Bugianus mense Octobris cum Francis, et vicit, et Melus fugiit cum aliquibus Francis ad Enricum Imp. + Cod. Andr. Et hoc proelium factum est ad Civitatem Cannensem*". – 'In October the aforementioned Boioannes ['Bugianus'] gives battle with the 'Franks' [Normans] and wins a victory, and Melus flees with the rest of the Franks to the [German] emperor Henry. The *Codex Andr.* says "and battle was joined near (towards) the town of Cannae".

After days in which the opposing armies manoeuvred to locate in the most advantageous situation, finally the catepan drew the Normans out onto the open field that borders the Ofanto River, close to the village of Cannae. A bloody contest took place in which finally the Byzantines had the best of it. The imperial heavy infantry in the shape of a detachment of the Varangian Guard played a leading role.

The army of Meles was completely defeated. Norwich, following Amatus s.23, says that *of the 250 Normans who fought in the front line, just 10 survived*. (One survivor was Rainult or Ranulf Drengot, the future – AD 1030 – lord of Aversa.) All the gains of the campaign were lost in a day. The Lombards fled in the direction of Benevento at full speed.

The Normans who survived the battle dispersed: they entered the service of the Lombard princes Pandolfo of Capua and Guaimar of Salerno; others fled to Montecassino, and some joined Daton or Dattus, the brother-in-law of Meles: see 1021.

Several of the Normans, after having suffered heavy losses in the battle, enter Byzantine service, while others hire themselves out as mercenaries to various Lombard lords.

New imperial fortress: Basil Boioannes thereafter (1018-1019) founds Troia as a fortress-village on the site of ancient Aecae, *where the Via Traiana exits from the Apennine Mountains on its way from Benevento to Bari*. He garrisons this new stronghold with Norman mercenaries now inducted in the *Imperial* army (alt. date: 1019). Boiannes organised a chain of old and newly founded fortifications across northern Apulia: Melfi, Troia [new], Dragonara [established 1004; now refortified], Civitate and Castel Fiorentino in the far north of Apulia, i.e. N of modern Foggia (Burman p.117).

Basil Boioannes continues his campaign and eventually restores Byzantine control over most of the southern Italian mainland. Only the Lombard duchy of Benevento, a vassal of the Papacy, successfully resists.

3. (*Or later*: Boioannes probably led just the one expedition to Sicily, in late 1024 or early 1025): The catepan Basil Boioannes crossed to Ja'far al-Kalbi's Sicily and captured Messina [near the NE point] from the Muslims, but then the protospatharios Orestes, in charge of a mixed army including Varangians, lost it again (in 1025-26: see there). Cf 1019.

According to Ahmad, p.32, it was in Ja'far's time, r. 996-1021, that the decline of the Kalbid dynasty really began. Cf 1015.

4. The Adriatic again becomes a Byzantine lake: As a corollary of his defeat of the Bulgarians, emperor Basil asserted direct suzerainty over central Dalmatia; Venice lost its role as middleman. Dubrovnik (Ragusa) thereby freed itself from the control of Venice and returned to the protection of the East Roman Empire, accepting (1019) the governorship of a Greek *strategos* appointed by Constantinople. It became a Theme in its own right. In Dalmatia proper, the prior or mayor of Zadar (not a Greek) seems to have be

reinstated as the local imperial governor and he too received the post of *strategos* of Dalmatia (Fine 1991: 277-79).

The Serbs too recognised the suzerainty of Constantinople. Even distant Croatia acknowledged the supremacy of Byzantium; its king Kresimir received in return the high court title of *patrikios* (ibid.) Cf 1024.

1018-19:

Italy: Following his victory at Cannae (above: 1018), Boioannes set about building a great fortress just east of the [Apennine](#) pass guarding the entrance of the Via Traiana onto the [Apulian](#) plain. The high hilltop stronghold of [Troia](#), as he called it: named after the ancient city of [Asia Minor](#), *Troy*—near modern Foggia—was garrisoned by Boiannes' own contingent of Norman troops in [1019](#) (Norwich, *Normans* p.21).

From Benevento, the Antique highway the Via Traiana ran in a direct line out of the mountains to ancient Aecae (medieval Troia), and thence ESE to Canosa, Bitonto and Bari. Another road ran from Troia NW via Foggia to Siponto (Manfredonia).

Soon all the South had submitted to Byzantine authority, with the exception of the [Duchy of Benevento](#), still faithful to the [Papacy](#) (Wikipedia, 2011, under "Boioannes").

1019:

1. The last Bulgarian resistance is overcome.

The East-Roman **Ducate** or 'duchy' of **Bulgaria**, created at or before this time, with its capital at Skopje, covered the whole inland north-west of the Balkans, centred on today's 'former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia' (FYROM). The **theme of Sirmium**, ancient Pannonia-Illyricum: modern Serbia, was governed from the town of the same name, located upstream from our Belgrade.* The **theme of Paristrion** (created c. 1016: see there) was based at Silistria (Dristra) on the lower Danube. The former themes or duchies lost in the previous century were restored, namely those of Dalmatia, Dyrrhachium, Nikopolis [Epirus], Macedonia, Strymon, Thessaloniki and Hellas or *Helladikoi* (Vine 1991: 200).

(*) Byzantine rule did not last long here. By 1030 the region of Belgrade was (back) in the hands of a local Slavic zhupan (Holmes 2005: 425-26).

2. Italy: The catepan Boioannes extends Imperial rule north along the Apulian coast to the Gargano peninsula, the big bump at the top of Italy's calf. The pope travels to Germany to obtain the Western emperor Henry's help against what he expects will be further Byzantine incursions. See 1021, 1022 (German invasion), 1025.

Boioannes was particularly active in consolidating Imperial authority in the Troia region, SW of modern Foggia, a wasteland bordering the territories of the Lombard princes to the north and west. Byzantine client and participated

in joint Lombard-Byzantine military actions. See 1021.

As we have noted, forts were built and garrisons were installed. Pandulf IV, the Lombard prince of Capua, opted to become an imperial ally, and as Schlumberger notes, the catepan ordered built a whole series of secondary fortresses, both in the west and in the north, on the border of the principality of Benevento, forming a nearly impassable circle against invaders from the North. The strongholds of Dragonara (near Potenza), Ferentino, Civitate on the Fortore River were raised, grouped like subjects around their 'queen', the new Troy (*Troia*). All were completed during 1019. —Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine* II: 10; my translation: MO'R.

A Latin charter issued in 1024 by Boioannes concerning the lands around Troia refers to its Norman garrison thus: "*Stratigoti per invidiam accusantes troianum populum* [sic: populum] *dicebant nobis: Populus iste cui eos datis has fines fortis et daras* [sic: durus] *est, qui omnes nos vicinos debellabit, et etiam principes sanctiam* [sic: sanctium? Sanciam?] *imperii interficiet.*" Quoted by Schlumberger. In English:

'The strategoi [Greek officers], through hatred (envy) were blaming (accusing) the Trojan people /of Troia/ [i.e the Normans in Byzantine employ], saying to (telling) us: This people (nation) that is given these territories (boundaries) is strong and harsh (hardened), who [it: this nation] will vanquish (subdue) all our neighbours, and [it] will even (actually) destroy (kill) the chiefs (leaders) of (in) the most holy empire [meaning Boioannes himself].' - *Imperium sanctum*, 'holy empire' vs *imperium sanctum* 'the holiest (most holy) empire'. *Imperii*: 'in the empire, of the state'. Cf *sanciam* = 'I might ordain/confirm/sanction (it)' or 'I will ordain, confirm, ratify'.

1019-21:

The East: The second part of the reign of the Egyptian caliph Al Hakim was a period of suffering for all non-Muslims. Reversing the traditional tolerant attitudes of his Fatimid dynasty, he embarked on a policy of severe humiliation and *persecution of all Christians and Jews* and also Sunni Muslims. As a result many from both faiths converted to Islam but many others left the country altogether. Some of the departing Jews went to Yemen but large numbers settled in the lands of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empire. It was felt that the relatively good conditions that prevailed there offered a viable option for Jews.

1019-25:

Eustathius, earlier the protopresbyter of the imperial palace, was Patriarch of Constantinople.

In the 'conversation of rivalry' with Rome, Eustathius offered a compromise to Pope John XIX (acc. 1024), suggesting that the Orthodox Patriarch would be ecumenic in its own sphere (*in suo orbe*) in the East as the Papacy was in the world (*in universo*), for Constantinople had always recognised Rome's primacy of honour within Christendom. It is assumed this was Eustathius' effort to retain control over the Southern Italian churches (which had been under the jurisdiction of Constantinople since the 8th century). While the offer was rejected, there was an acceptance by John of the practice of the Byzantine Rite in the south of Italy in exchange for the

establishment of Latin Rite churches in Constantinople.

1019-36/38:

The Kalbid emir of Sicily Ahmad II b. Yusuf, called *al-Akhal* ("the Dark"). In full: Ahmad ibn Abu'l-Futuh Yusuf; also referred to (after his son) as *Abu Ja'far* and 'Ta'yid al-Dawla', "succour of the state" (Bosworth 2004). Al-Akhal's older *brother*, Ja'far, who he replaced, should not be confused with Al-Akhal's *son* Ja'far. - See 1025.

1020-21:

The East: Emperor Basil leads (1021) a punitive raid into Georgia. The army included Varangians; they are mentioned as being 'very fierce' (Benediktz 2007: 49; D'Amato 2010: 7). Cf 1022.

Basil moved back to Georgia, where the ruler *Keorki* or George was defying him. Basil gave him opportunities to submit, but finally sent his troops on a three month reign of terror. The Russian Varangians showed great ferocity, killing men, women and children.

An exhausting war lasted for two years, and ended in a decisive Byzantine victory, forcing Giorgi to agree to a peace treaty, in which he had not only to abandon his claims to Tao [between Trebizond and Tbilisi], but to surrender several of his southwestern possessions to Basil, and to give his three-year-old son, Bagrat, as hostage.

Basil wintered at Trebizond in 1021-22. Then during the spring of 1022 [see there], he launched a final offensive winning a crushing victory over the Georgians at Svindax in the Phasian province, i.e. near the Phasis River [Georgian *Basiani*, and Turkish *Pasin*]. —Romilly Jenkins, *Byzantium: the Imperial centuries, AD 610-1071*, University of Toronto Press 1987, p.328; Holmes 2005: 98.

2. Italy: "*Descenderunt Sarraceni cum Rayca, et obsederunt Bisinianum* [Bisignano], *et illud apprehenderunt. Et hoc anno mortuus est ipse Amira, et Melus Dux Apuliae*" (Lupus): 'The Saracens with [the Apulian rebel leader*] Rayca arrive, and they lay siege to Bisignano [in Calabria: N of Cosenza], and they take it. And in this year the Amir himself [the Sicilian emir, Ja'far al-Kalbi] dies, and [also] Melus [pretender] dux of Apulia [dies in exile in Germany]'. See 1023: Rayca raids to Bari.

(*) Evidently Raica or Rayca, probably an ethnic Arab** from Bari, became the leader of the anti-imperialist rebels in Apulia after the death (1020) of Melus; he allied himself with the Muslims of Sicily (Von Falkenhausen, in Magdalino, ed., *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, 2003: 153; also Metcalfe pp.79-80). Indeed one secondary source asserts that he was the brother of the Byzantine archbishop (Informazioni Bari © ItalySquare.com: www.italysquare.com/it/bari.htm; accessed 2009).

(**) In Arabic, *raica* means 'sweet, healthy' (as applied e.g. to water).

1021:

Italy: In June 1021 the Byzantine catepan Boioannes and his new ally Prince [Pandulf IV of Capua](#) marched on Melus of Bari's brother-in-law Dattus in his

'tower-castle' on the [Garigliano](#) River, N of Naples between Gaeta and Capua.

Dattus commanded a small force of Lombards and Normans. After a brief siege of two days, the tower was taken and Dattus was taken prisoner to Bari. There on [15 June](#) he was tied up in a sack with a monkey, a rooster and a snake and *tossed into the sea*. The next year, in response, a huge Italo-German army, perhaps as many as 50,000 men, marched south in three divisions and joined together to attack the new fortress of Troia. The garrison held out and never fell (Norwich, *Normans* p.25; Wikipedia 2011 under 'Basil Boiannes'). See more below.

2. Disappearance of the "mad" caliph of Egypt, al-Hakim.

1021-22:

1. The East: As noted, Basil II campaigned in Armenia and Georgia with an army that included the Varangian Guard. He annexes the Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan and compels the King of Ani to bequeath his kingdom to Romania (Byzantium) [see 1041, 1045]. Then he proceeded into Iberia (Georgia).

Holmes: "Although his first incursion into Iberia in the autumn of 1021 proved to be inconclusive, another offensive in the spring of 1022 resulted in a crushing victory."

In the final battle, on 11 September 1022 at Aghpha near Erzerum* in Armenia, King Keorki/George, having first asked for peace, attempted a surprise attack on the Byzantines. Basil dealt a crushing blow to the Iberians (Georgians). *The Varangians distinguished themselves*, attacking before the rest of the army had engaged and putting the Georgians to flight (Benedikt & Blondal, *Varangians*, 2007 edn p.49). As in Bulgaria, Basil *blinded* the enemy soldiers taken prisoner; and he is said to have offered a gold coin for every enemy head brought to him; he stacked the heads along the road.

(*) From the Persian *Arz-e Rum*, 'Roman border (town)'. Name in Gk: Theodosiopolis.

The deposed king of Ani received in exchange the town or theme of Sebastia in Cappadocia; "14,000" Armenians followed him there.

Fully eight new, but small, **themes** were now created in the north-east. The two outermost themes were named **Soteropolis** (eastern Chaldia) and **'Iberia' so-called**, which was actually located in N Armenia (map in Treadgold 1997: 535). See 1053. Further east, beyond Lake Van, in eastern Armenia, a large **ducate of Vaspurakan** was formed (Treadgold 1997: 529). Its eastern border was *THE MOST EASTERLY POINT EVER TO BE REACHED BY THE MEDIEVAL EMPIRE*. and not far short of where Trajan's conquests reached during the apogee of Antique Rome.

2. Asia: Rebellion by Xiphias, the hero of 1014, by this time general of the Anatolic theme. He proclaimed Nicephorus Phocas, Leo's son, as emperor. But soon Xiphias killed Phocas, seeking to be emperor himself, and the rebellion collapsed. On account of his earlier good service, Xiphias was not

mutilated, but only exiled; other rebels, however, were executed or blinded.

"The most serious insurrection that Basil faced at the end of his reign occurred in central Anatolia during the course of his campaign against the Georgians. It was led by Nicephorus Xiphias and Nicephorus Phocas in 1021-2. So serious was this revolt that when it was eventually crushed by Theophylact Dalassenus, the strategus of the Anatolicon, Basil had the head of Phocas brought to the imperial camp on the Georgian border and paraded among the troops" (Holmes).

3. Italy: As noted earlier, Boioannes, the Byzantine catepan of Italy, leading Norman and other troops, resisted (1022) an Italo-German army led by the German emperor Henry II. Henry's '50,000' or "51,000" men (a figure hard to believe, given the poor logistics of the Latins). After an investment of three months (April-June 1022), Henry failed to take Troia, but left the South well aware that Western imperial authority could still extend that far. Nevertheless Henry's prestige suffered, while that of Boioannes – and his Norman mercenaries – rose further (says Norwich, *Normans* p.26; also Magdalino 2003: 149; Wikipedia, 2011, under "Henry II"). See 1023.

"When the region came under sustained attack, as was the case in 1021-22 during an *invasion by the German emperor Henry II*, there was very little that the Byzantine senior commanders could do except wait patiently in Bari until the enemy's alliances with local Lombard princes fell apart and concerns beyond the Alps diverted their energies northwards again" (thus Holmes). Boioannes had increased the size of the garrison in Bari and established a double-line of fortified urban settlements in the borderland region of northern Apulia, but presumably he had too few troops to feel confident in confronting the German emperor in the field. See next.

In 1022 Henry set out southwards commanding a large force, said to number over 20,000 men, down the [Adriatic](#) coast. He sent his chancellor, [Pilgrim, Archbishop of Cologne](#), ahead with a slightly smaller army, supposedly about 20,000 men, along the [Tyrrhenian](#) littoral to subjugate [Capua](#). This he did, and took the prince, [Pandulf IV](#), a Byzantine ally, captive. A third army, smaller still (supposedly "11,000" men), under the command of Poppo or Wolfgang, the German-born patriarch [archbishop] of Aquileia, went through the [Apennines](#), i.e. down the centre. *All three divisions joined to besiege Troia, the new border fortress of the Byzantine catepan Basil Boiannes*. Siege machines were used by the Germans, but the Byzantines sallied out to burn them (Bloch II p.15; Purton p.177).

June, 1022: After three months, an outbreak of the plague or dysentery among the German troops forced Henry to retreat from Troia and abandon his campaign in Italy.

c.1022:

Hungarian alliance: Argyra, d. after 1031, dau. of Basil's nephew Romanos (the future basileus), marries the Hungarian king Emmerich, r. 1007-1031.

1023:

South-central Italy:

(a) “Anno 1023. *Venit Rayca cum Jaffari caiti Barum mense Iunij et obsedit eam uno die: et amoti* [“having been moved or taken away”] *exinde comprehenderunt Palagianum oppidum et fabricatum est Castellum in Motula*”. – ‘ (The rebel leader) Rayca, with the Muslim chief (caitus = Arabic *qa'id* or *caid*) Jaffari [Abu Ja'far], comes to Bari in June, and he besieges it for one day, ?and having been pushed back/moved away [*amoti*] from there?, they seize the fortified hill-town of Palagiano*, and a fortress was built at Mottola (by the Byzantines)’. –Lupus.

(*) Located a little inland from the Gulf of Taranto: south of Mottola.

(b) Following Arab raids in S Apulia and the brief siege of Bari, Boioannes constructed or further strengthened the fortresses to protect the southern tract of the Via Appia, namely those of Melfi (guarding against incursions from Benevento) and Mottola (as a backstop to Taranto). The Gulf of Taranto can be seen from Mottola (Von Falkenhausen in Magdalino 2003: 149).

The Appian Way divides at Benevento. The upper leg – the Appia Traiana – runs broadly eastwards to Bari. Melfi, which is about halfway between Benevento to Bari (somewhat nearer the former), lies within easy marching distance of this northern leg. Melfi guarded the southern side of the Traiana, while Troia guarded its northern side.

The other leg of the ancient highway, the Via Appia proper, runs from Benevento south-east through the interior past inland Mottola to the Gulf of Taranto at Taranto and thence across the ‘heel’ to Brindisi. This highway too ran not very far from Melfi.

1023: 1. fl. Al-Biruni, Muslim scholar; Persian-born Arabic writer. Born in Khwarizm, the region south of the Aral Sea. Author of the “Chronology of Ancient Nations”, c.1000, and “History of India” or *Ta'rikh al-Hind*, completed 1030. In 1017 he was one of several scholars captured by Mahmud of Ghazni, who he served thereafter in Afghanistan as astrologer.

2. fl. Abu'l-Ala, the blind Syrian-born Arab poet. Critic of irrationalism; + late “artifice” of language. Syria at this time was divided between the Emirate of Aleppo (west) and the Emirate of Mosul (east).

1024:

The West: Kreshimir III of Croatia intervened in a Venetian quarrel and occupied the Dalmatian towns and islands (1024). However, the Byzantine general “Buzianus” (Boioannes) defeated his army in battle and forced him to surrender the towns. Moreover, Kreshimir's queen and his younger son were captured taken to Constantinople.

The imperial catepan of Italy, Basil Boioannes, crosses the Adriatic and invades Croatia, probably with Varangians. Basil's men carried off the *patricissa*, the wife of king Kresimir (Chreshimir) III to Bari, whence she and her son were sent as hostages to Constantinople (Von Falkenhausen in Magdalino 2003: 149; also Rodriquez). Basil also captured the prior [mayor] of Spalato/Split, Cosma, along with his wife and son and took all three to Byzantium. —Praga, *Dalmatia* p. 72.

The immediate result of these reverses and troubled events was *reestablishment of the Byzantine authority and power over Dalmatia*. The imperial administration of the territory was headed by the prior of Zadar, who in token of his exalted rank bore the honorific title of proconsul (Gk *anthypatos*).

The East-Romans reassert direct suzerainty along the full length of Dalmatia; the "prior", or town governor, of Zadar is restored as the imperial representative in Zadar, and the doge of Venice ceases to be *dux Venetiae "et Dalmatiae"*.

By 1036 the prior of Zadar will become the 'strategos' of Dalmatia (Vine 1991: 277).

2a. Italy: Pandolf besieges Capua with an army built with the aid of Gaimar of Salerno, the Norman Rainulfo, and a small contingent of Boioannes' *East-Imperial* army.

November, 1024: Siege of Capua. Pandulf IV rushes to Salerno to confer with his brother-in-law, Guaimar III, on how to recover Capua. They hire the Norman company now led by Rainulf Drengot. They also appeal to catepan Basil Boioannes, but the Byzantines are preparing an expedition against Sicily, and so can only offer a small company of Greeks. Pandulf V ('Teano') of Capua rallies the defence of the town and withstands the large siege. Pandulf IV will not capture it until May 1026, 18 months later, when eventually Boioannes is able to help him out.

2b. Sicily: Receiving the alarming news that Emperor Basil II is outfitting (1024) a massive Byzantine expedition to invade the island, emir Ahmed al-Akhal appeals to the Zirids of Ifriqiya for help. The Zirids dispatch a fleet (1025), but they are caught up in a storm near Pantelleria (the island between Tunisia and Sicily) and sink.

c.1025:

Greek (Byzantine) version of the tale of "Barlaam and Josephat", borrowed from the Georgian version. A Christian romance concerning the (imaginary) conversion of India to Christianity.



Above: Northern Africa and western Eurasia in 1025.

The term 'German Holy Roman Empire' is anachronistic: this name appears only in the 1200s. The German king did claim the title 'emperor of the Romans', but there was as yet no entity known as the 'Holy Roman Empire'. The better term is 'German Empire' (the first *Reich*).

"Ajtony" (no.17: see near Hungary), also called Ahtum, was a Vlach (Romanian) princeling, fl. AD 1020; historians apply his name to his ephemeral domain.

The Kievan Principality ("Kievan Rus'") broke up in a civil war that began in 1015; it dissolved into three lesser principalities: Chernigov, Polotsk and Novgorod. Specifically, in 1024 the warring brothers Yaroslav and Mstislav agreed to divide Kievan Rus' between them: the area stretching left from the Dnieper, with its capital at Chernihiv (Chernigov), was ceded to Mstislav until his death in 1036.

The name 'Cumans' [Gk *Koumanoi*, Russian *Polovtsi*] is probably best not used until after 1030, when the Turkic people of that name had taken over from the Rus' and the Pechenegs in what is now Ukraine.

It is not incorrect to label Iraq and eastern Syria as the 'Abbasid

Caliph, because the caliph of the Arab 'Abbasid line (Sunni Islam) did live in Baghdad; but he had no political power: the real rulers were the Buyid line of shahs (Iranian Shi'ites) who generally also ruled Fars and Kerman (see on map). (Rival Buyid princes sometimes held Fars or Kerman separately from Baghdad.) Abu Kalijar, 1024-48, affected the title *shahanshan* ("emperor") in the later years of his reign. Thus the better label would be 'Buyid Empire' or 'Shahdom'.

1025:

1. The West: Plans were drawn up for the reconquest of Sicily from Arab-Berber (Kalbid) control. Emperor Basil sent a large force, supported by a fleet, to pacify Italy and recapture Sicily. As noted, the Zirid ruler of Tunisia, Al-Mu'izz, sent a fleet to aid the Sicilians, but it was destroyed by storms before it could meet the Byzantine ships in battle.

The Catepan of Italy, Boioannes, took part in the aborted campaign against Sicily in 1025. He joined the eunuch commander Orestes, a veteran of the Bulgarian campaign, who had sailed with an advance party of troops and *landed in Messina* (Holmes 2005: 505, citing the *Annales Baresnes*, Lupus, and Skylitzes). More specifically *Annales Baresnes* says that in 1025 Boioannes "with troops from Bari, took ship for Messina" (Anonymus Baresnes 149, in PBW). The troops included "Russi" (i.e. Varangians from Kievan Rus), "Vandals" [sic: *Guandal-orum*, probably Wends*], Turks, Bulgarians (sic: *Burgarorum*, probably meaning Greeks and/or Slavs from the Theme of that name), Vlachs, Macedonians "and others" (*Annales Baresnes* online; and cited by Benedikz p.52; D'Amato 2010: 5; ').* Although the imperial troops were landed, a further Zirid-Kalbid fleet defeated Orestes' fleet off Reggio and the Arabs recaptured Messina.

This, and Basil II's death, meant that the main expeditionary force did not set off, and the mission against Sicily failed.

(*) *Guandalorum* is the Latin plural possessive or genitive, English 'of Guandali or of the Guandals'. See a similar list from Lupus's Chronicle, under 1027 below. Describing a Byzantine force in 1011 (see above under 1009-11), Leo of Osta wrote of *Gualani* as evidently one type of Varangian.

Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani*, 1858, II: 365 guesses, Probably correctly, that the 'Vandals' of 1025 were non-Russian Varangians. And Ivo Vukevich (2001: 184) notes that 'Guandali' was used in medieval Latin, e.g. by Godfrey of Viterbo and William of Rubruck, as a name for the Wends, the *Slavs* of the southern Baltic coasts. Thus the *Annales Baresnes* was probably distinguishing between Scandinavian-Varangians (Russi) and Slavic-Varangians (Wends). —Vukevich, *Rex germanorum, populos sclavorum: an inquiry into the origin & early history of the Serbs/Slavs of Sarmatia, Germania & Illyria*, University Center Press, 2001.

2. **Death of Basil, aged 67 or older:** his brother Constantine VIII, aged 65, now rules alone.

To recap. Basil was formally crowned co-emperor with his father in 960; but he was the junior emperor until 976. Under his rule Romanic power reached its apogee. He fought in Syria against the I dynasty of Egypt and extended East Roman rule in the Balkans, Mesopotamia, Georgia and Armenia.

His nickname "Slayer of Bulgars", applied after his death, derives from the ruthless campaign waged against the West Bulgarian kingdom which was incorporated into the Byzantine empire. On one occasion perhaps 14 or 15,000 Bulgarian prisoners were blinded (and perhaps not).

In a long and brutal series of campaigns 990-1016, Basil crushed and annexed the still extensive West Bulgarian state centred at Ohrid in modern Albania. *"For the first time since the barbarian invasion of the late 6th century",* writes Obolensky p.179, *"the entire Balkan peninsula lay in the unchallenged possession, or under the sovereignty, of Byzantium".*

Basil was also successful in the east. He secured the empire's hold on northern Syria in 995-96 and signed a treaty with the I Caliph of Egypt in 1001 which lasted to the end of his reign. At his death in 1025, "Greek" [**] rule extended from Syria to the upper Danube River and from southern Italy to Armenia.

(**) We use **Greek** in the sense that Greek was the language of the ruling group. Greek-speakers probably formed less than 50% of the empire's population after 1018 (cf Mango p.29).



Above: The 'Themes' (provinces) in 1025. - The Theme of Sirmium (west of Belgrade), created in about 1016, was ephemeral. By 1030 Belgrade was (back) in the hands of a local Slavic zhupan (Holmes 2005: 425-26).

Notice how much of ancient Macedonia has become the Theme of Thessalonica; and the name of Macedonia has transferred to ancient S. Thrace [seat at Adrianople], while (east) Bulgaria is divided between 'Macedonia' so-called and the Theme of Paristrion. Finally, old West Bulgaria has become 'Boulgaria' [seat at Skopje].

Likewise in the East: the imperial Theme of Iberia is geographically a segment of old Armenia and lies west of the (non-Byzantine) Kingdom of Iberia. And Byzantine Mesopotamia lies west of the upper Euphrates, rather than between (*meso*) the rivers (*potamia*) Euphrates and Tigris.

In the far west, the Romance-speaking port-town of Zara (Zadar) was caught in a 'tug of peace' between Venice and Constantinople; it returned to formal suzerainty to the Empire in about 1019, but was essentially self-governing (Fine 1991: 277-79). Slavic-speaking Zachlounia (Croatian *Zahumlje*) too tugged a forelock to the Empire until after 1025. Evidently it was independent during the 1030s, briefly returning to nominal Byzantine suzerainty by 1042 (Fine 1991: 206).

Territorial review

The borders of the Empire in 1025 were as follows:

North-east: Imperial Armenia and the Byzantine 'ducate of Iberia', bordering Armenian Armenia and Georgia. The most distant Theme was that of Vaspurakan.

South-east: Byzantine west Syria, in formal terms the ducate of Antioch, bordered Muslim east Syria (Emirate of Aleppo) and Lebanon. *Asia Minor constituted the heartland of the empire.*

North: Byzantine Cherson in the Crimea (vs Pechenegs); and the Danube (vs Pechenegs and Hungary).

Geographically the enemies nearest to Constantinople were the Pechenegs in what is today Rumania.

North-west: The Byzantine or *nominally* Byzantine Dalmatian coast was separated by the Croats and Serbs from the East-Roman lower Danube (downstream from Belgrade) and Byzantine-ruled Bulgaria. The two Byzantine themes on the Danube River were those of *Sirmium* (south of the middle Danube) and *Paristrion* (south of the lower Danube). As we have said, by 1030 the region of Belgrade was (back) in the hands of a local Slavic zhupan (Holmes 2005: 425-26).

South: Greece, Crete and Cyprus.

South-west: Southern Italy: The catepanate of Longobardia extended from S

Calabria to N Apulia (vs the Lombard-Italian principalities of Salerno and Capua-Benevento). The edges of imperial territory lay west of the line Montepeloso-Melfi-Troia. *A point near (SW) of Melfi was the intersection of the lands of the Duchy of Benevento, the Duchy of Salerno and the Catepanate.* It is uncertain where the border lay between the Salernitan lands in southern Campania and those of the Catepanate in northern Calabria. Sicily remained under Muslim rule.

1025-28: CONSTANTINE VIII

Son of Romanus II, and younger brother of Basil II, Constantine was aged 65 or 67 ("70" according to J B Bury in his *Selected Essays*) when he assumed the throne. Wife: Eudocia. His daughters, the future empresses Zoe and Theodora, were aged about 47 and 45 respectively.

Constantine blinded several of Basil's generals, for real or imagined disloyalty. Indeed during his short reign he executed or mutilated – usually by blinding – hundreds of innocent men who he imagined or was told were plotting against him (Norwich 1993: 268).

Bury loc. cit. says his chief achievement was to spend the immense treasure that Basil had accumulated. Constantine was "an old voluptuary utterly unfit to conduct the government".

1025-26:

Italy: The Byzantine catepan Basil Boïoannes led an expedition to aid Pandulf IV of Capua in retaking Capua, who had been deprived of his seat three years earlier by the agents of the German emperor Henry II. (The new Western emperor Conrad had released Pandulf in 1024.)

Boioannes, who had been busy on a Sicilian expedition (aborted when emperor Basil II died), joined Pandulf and Salernitan allies with a major force in [1026](#). Normans fought on both sides. Capua fell in [1026](#), and the count of Teano (styled Pandulf V) was given safe passage to friendly [Naples](#) by the Greek commander. The siege had lasted 18 months (Purton 2010: 177). This time Pandulf IV lasted in power until [1038](#).

This was to be *Boioannes' last major campaign*. See 1027.

Catepans of Italy, as listed by Hofmann: (a) "Basilius Bugianus seu *Bagianus*, Scylitzae". Recte: Basil Boioannes,* AC 1018. 1019. 1024. (b) Abalantius Patricius, A. C. 1018. (c) Safatius *krites* AC 1023. (d) Leo Potus [Pothos] AC 1027.

Other lists have: Christophoros Burgaris or Baragis, 1027–1029; and Pothos Argyrus, 1029–1031. —Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile*, Paris, 1907; Stephenson, *Legend* p.45.

(*) Literally the name means "Ox-John" in Greek. But 'Boioannes' [Boiwnnhz] may simply be the Byzantinised form of a Bulgarian name, *Bajan* or *Bojan* (thus Von Falkenhausen in Magdalino, *Year 1000*

p.148).

Map:

GO HERE for a map of southern Italy in the early 11th C.:

<http://www.imperiobizantino.com/italia/mapa1.jpg>

Note that the corner-point between Beneventan, Salernitan and Imperial territory lay on the upper Ofanto River *west of Melfi*. Modern-day Basilicata was divided between Salerno and Byzantine "Longobardia" (greater Apulia). The corner-point between the lands of Salerno, Byzantine Calabria and Byzantine Longobardia lay *NW of Cassano*.

Bishoprics in Byzantine Italy

From Rodriquez.

28 in 'Longobardia', listed from north to south: Lesina, Civitate, Siponto, Lucera, Troina, Bovino, Ascoli, Salpi, Melfi, Lavello, Canosa, Trani, Giovinazzo, Bitonto, Bari, Polignano, Monopoli, Conversano, Gravino, Acereza, Tricarico, Tursi, Taranto, Oria, Brindisi, Lecce, Gallipoli and Otranto.

22 in Calabria, again from north to south: Cassano, Malvito, Rossano, Bisignano, Umbriatico, Cosenza, Acerentia, Santa Severina, Amantea, Nicastro, Catanzaro, Crotone, Squillace, Vibona, Tropea, Nicotera, Tauriana, Oppido, Gerace, Locri, Santa Agata and Reggio.

1025-29:

N and C. Syria: Salih b. Mirdas, first Mirdasid ruler. He had captured Aleppo in 1024.

1025-43:

Alexius Studites, a monk of the Stoudios monastery (hence his sobriquet), was patriarch of Constantinople. He promoted the zealous actions of John of Melitene whose interest it was to limit the influence of the Syro-Jacobite Church in the south-east of the Byzantine Empire especially in the newly conquered themes (provinces) of Mesopotamia and Telouch. In 1036 he thwarted the attempts of John the Orphanotrophos (the emperor's brother) to gain the patriarchal see.

From 1026:

The west: The allied Sicilian-Tunisian fleet of the Zirids and Kalbites makes incursions against the coastal regions of Illyria, which is our Croatia, and Greece. See next and cf 1032.

1026:

1. The Aegean: As related by Skylitzes, Georgios Theodorokanos, strategos [admiral] of Samos, fought against an Arab fleet that attacked the Cyclades, and with the help of the strategos of Chios, Beriboes [Berivoi], he chased them away, capturing 12 ships and dispersing the others (PBW, citing Skylitzes 373.11-14: trans. Wortley p.352).

2. Muslim Mesopotamia: The Kurdish leader Nasr al-Dawla b. Marwan took the town of Edessa: modern Urfa, in today's far eastern Turkey, in 1026-27. Cf 1031.

c. 1027:

Italy: (Possibly referring to 1025): Following the arrival of reinforcements from the East, Reggio is restored (perhaps re-fortified) by the catepan Boioannes ("Vulcanus") (after an Arab raid?); (or captured & destroyed by Boioannes)? "*Regium restaurata est a Vulcano catepano*": Annales Baresnes 53.38-39 under the year 1025.

Emperor Basil had died in December 1025; but (says Whittow) Orestes' invasion of Sicily proceeded in early 1026. Others (Treadgold) say the invasion did not proceed, precisely because Basil died.

There is much confusion here. Felix, *Byzanz und Islam*, 201, says Orestes was defeated at Reggio late in 1028 or early in 1029. This seems right, as Skylitzes mentions Orestes (PBW sv 'Orestes') in connection with two expeditions sent to Sicily, one sent by Basil II in 1025 and another sent later (but undated) by Romanos III, acc. 15 November 1028. The latter force was annihilated by the Saracens of Sicily. Lupus says Boioannes and Orestes were replaced and departed for Constantinople in 1028, but as the Byzantine year began on 1 September, this may be 1029 in our terms.

Chronicle of Lupus:* "*Cod. Andr. 1027. [sic: 1025? 1026? 1028?] Despotus Nicus in Italiam descendit cum ingentibus copijs [sic: copius] Russorum, Uandalorum, Turcarum, Bulgarorum, Brunchorum, Polonorum, Macedonum, aliarumque nationum ad Siciliam capiendam. Captum est autem Rhegium et ob Civium peccata destructum est a Vulcano Catepano*". - 'The despot (*despotes*, 'lord') Nikos [i.e. Orestes**] comes to Italy with vast forces of Russians [Varangians], Vandals [sic: Wends?] Turks, Bulgars, 'Brunchs' [sic: Franks?/Normans], Poles, Macedonians and other peoples to the still occupied/captured Sicily. Reggio, however, is captured and - ?on account of (*ob*) the sins (*peccata*) of its citizens (*civium*)? -, it is destroyed by the catepan Vulcanus [Boioannes]'. My translation, MO'R.

(*) The *Chronicon rerum in regno Neapolitano gestarum*, ascribed uncertainly to a 'Lupus Protospatharius Barensis', protospatharius Lupus of Bari.

(**) Cf Michele Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*: 1858, II: 365. Muratori proposes that 'Nicus' is short for 'Andronicus'.

1027:

1. Or in 1028, following her marriage to Romanos: Zoe forces her younger sister Theodora, aged about 47, into a convent.

2. S Italy: (Or 1028): Basil Boioannes is recalled to Constantinople. He is replaced as Catepan of Italy by Christopher (Christophoros) Burgaris or Baragis, until now catepan of Thessalonica (alt. date: 1028). The date of '1028' in Lupus is an error; Chalandon has corrected this to 1027. —Paul Magdalino, *Byzantium in the year 1000*, Brill, 2003 p.125, citing Skylitzes and

extant inscribed seals.

3. Capua takes over Naples: duke Sergius IV is restored in Naples in 1030 with Norman help.

Naples was ruled by Capua, 1027-1030; it returned to nominal Romanic control 1030-1139 in the sense that Sergius, d. 1036. saw himself as a vassal of the emperor. In other words, Naples now allied itself with Romania (Byzantium) against Capua.

1027-29:

The new catepan of Italy was Christophoros Burgaris, formerly the catepan of Bulgaria [the Byzantine Theme of that name] and Thessalonica (Stephenson 2003a: 45; and *ibid* 2003b, 'Balkan Frontier', in Magdalino). His tenure saw the recommencement of the [Saracen](#) incursions. In 1027, '[Obbiano](#)' – probably Uggiano in Apulia, near Lecce – capitulated and [Bari](#) itself had to repel an assault.

Lupus: "*Venit Eustachius cum filiis Basilico, et Mandatora* [sic: mandaton?], *et elegit Catepanum Christophorum. Et Orestes praedictus ascendit in Constantinopolim cum Bugiano*": 'Eustachius* comes with his sons and an Imperial Mandaton [message, mandate], and he instals (lit. "chooses") Christopher as catepan; and the aforementioned Orestes departs [1028] for Constantinople with Boioannes ("Bugianus")'.

(*) This is probably Eustathius Daphnomeles, the strategos of Dyrrachium from 1018 to 1029; presumably as imperial legate he formally conveyed Christopher to Bari (cf Stephen Kerner 1983: *Emperors and aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081*).

Raica and Saffari [?]Ja'far], two prominent Muslim commanders, besieged the fortified town of Obbiano (Uggiano?). Its people made peace with the raiders by agreeing to hand over their non-residents (to become slaves). Raica went on to Bari, where he fought ("1029": see there) a battle with the new katepan of Italy, Pothos (Pothos Argyros; [Italian](#): *Potone Argiro*). The chronicler Lupus protospatharius, in *Chronicon rerum in regno Neapolitano gestarum*, misdates this to 1029; the correct date is 1027. —'Prosop. Byz World' [PBW], at linnet.cch.kcl.ac.uk:8080/PBW3. See 1031.

(1029: sic:) "*Rayca et Saffari obsederunt castellum Obbianum qui Obbianenses extraneos tradente pacificaverunt cum ipsis et mense Iulij venit Potho Catepanus fecitque pugnam cum Rayca in Baro*". – 'Raica and Saffari [= Ja'far?]* besiege the fortress of Obbianus, which, the Obbianians surrendering (it) [and] the foreigners/non-residents (*extraneos*), they make peace with them; and in the month of July comes/arrives the [new] catepan Pothos, and he fights with Raica at Bari'. —Lupus.

(*) Ja'far is the reading given by Michele Amari and Jules Gay. Von Falkenhausen in Magdalino 2003: 153 prefers "Abu Ja'far" ('the father of Ja'far') and calls him a *qa'id*.

1027-39: r. German emperor Conrad II.

1028:

1. Constantine VIII dies at the age of 68. Like his brother, Constantine died without a male heir. The empire thus passed to his daughter [Zoe](#), and her husband [Romanos Argyros](#).
2. Or 1027: Basileios Boioannes left Italy, having served as katepano. Orestes the *koitonites* [an imperial chamberlain, from *koiton* 'bed-chamber'] went with him (Lupus, cited in PBW).

Portrait:

GO HERE for a photograph of the famous mosaic of Zoe in Hagia Sophia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:EmpZoe.jpg>

Dynasty and Lineage

Imperial burials: After the year 1028, the Church of the Holy Apostles - the great Constantinian *martyrium* rebuilt by Justinian in the sixth century and refurbished by Basil I in the late ninth century - was no longer used by Byzantine emperors as their final, communal resting place. Rather, private dynastic chapels became increasingly popular. The new emphasis on lineage and extended family ties was due to the emergence of the military aristocracy as the ruling elite of Byzantium. —Ann Wharton Epstein, *Popular and Aristocratic Cultural Trends in Byzance*: University of California Press; accessed at http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/epstein_trends.html

1028-34: ROMANUS III Argyrus

(Argyros is Gk for "silver": a family name.)

Romanus, "a recognised mediocrity" according to Treadgold 1997: 584, was aged about 60 at accession: he was married to the 50 or so years old princess Zoe, daughter of the late emperor. Romanos had served as a senior judge under [Basil II](#), and under [Constantine VIII](#) he became prefect of [Constantinople](#).

"Romanus III deluded himself with dreams of being a great conqueror, like Trajan, or a philosopher-emperor, like Marcus Aurelius. He was fanatically devoted to the worship of the Virgin, and this found expression in the building and restoration of churches dedicated to St. Mary, as well as the prominence she was accorded on all his coins." [I have lost the reference for this, MO'R.]

1028:

1. Constantinople: Foundation of the Peribleptos, first of the 'super-monasteries' which became the chief vehicles of imperial philanthropy.
2. Thessalonica: Building of the Church of Our Lady of the Coppersmiths, an attractive example of middle Byzantine architecture: picture in Treadgold,

State p.569.

c. 1028:

The Serçe Limani shipwreck, was a Byzantine trading vessel, a 'small coaster' that sank in about 1028. Serçe Limani is a natural harbour on the southern coast of Turkey opposite Rhodes.

The ship had been a small *two-masted* vessel with lateen sails. The mainmast was placed slightly aft of amidships, and the foremast, with a somewhat smaller sail, had probably raked forward over the bow. The ship had an overall length of perhaps only 50 Byzantine feet (15 m) and a breadth of 17 Byzantine feet (5.3 m). Despite these modest dimensions, her cargo capacity was some 30 metric tons; this was due to her very full, box-like hold, with a virtually flat bottom amidships.

Some of the glass weights bear *legible dates*, the latest being either 1024/25 or possibly 1021/22. The voyage must have occurred not long after the latest weights were issued, during a time of improving Islamic-Byzantine relations, affirmed by a peace treaty in 1027.

The shipboard diet included meat (pig, goat, and possibly sheep), fish (tunny, tub gurnard, bass and drum), almonds, assorted fruits, and olives; there may have been live goats on the ship. But hard tack (double-cooked wheat biscuit) would have provided the largest part of the crew's food.

Piracy was an ever present danger, and the ship was supplied with defensive arms. Iron spearheads belonging to 11 thrusting spears and 52 *javelins*, along with the remains of perhaps three swords, were recovered.

The cargoes included some three tons of glass cullet [scraps of broken or waste glass gathered for remelting], some 80 or more items of glassware, several dozen cooking pots, several dozen glazed bowls, several half-dozen lots of jugs and *gargoulettes* (one-handled jugs with a built-in filter), raisins, sumac [a plant used to flavour food], wine, and a perishable cargo occupying the forward half of the hold that could not be identified.

'Cullet' or crushed glass ready for recycling: more than 200 distinctly different shapes have been reassembled, some unique, including various types of beakers, cups, bowls, bottles, jars, ewers, jugs, plates and lamps.

The ship was carrying at least 104 Byzantine amphoras, three in the bow compartment, and the rest about equally divided between the hold just aft of midships and the stern compartment. Two of the amphoras had been made to carry olive oil; the rest, to carry *wine*. —“Serçe Limani: 11th Century Byzantine Shipwreck Excavation”, at <http://ina.tamu.edu/sercelimani.htm>; accessed 2008.

1028-57:

This period saw no fewer than 30 rebellions within the empire.

1029:

1. In Syria, three-way conflict between Byzantium, the Fatimids and the local Mirdasids. The Byzantines suffered heavy losses in a battle (31 October) in Syria under command of Michael Spondyles, duke of Antioch; Michael was then replaced (Treadgold 1997: 585; also PBW, citing Skylitzes 377.4-6; 378.53-379.57 and GI 581.4-7: Zo 17.11.14).

2. Arabs defeat Orestes, the Byzantine commander in Sicily.

*"Anno 1029. [an error: actually 1027] venit Eustachius cum filiis Basilico et Mandatora [sic: ?mandaton, "decree" *], et elegit Catepanum Christophorum et Orestes praedictus ascendit in Constantinopolim cum Bugiano."*

'Eustathius came with his sons (and) Basilikos and an imperial decree, and chose (*elegit*, installed) Christopher [Burgaris] as catepan, and the aforementioned Orestes embarked for Constantinople with Boioannes' (Lupus).

(*) ?Or perhaps 'along with a *basilikos mandator*', a person whose junior court title this was? In Latin *cum* + the ablative signifies "with" (accompanied by). One would ordinarily read *cum basilico mandatura* (sic) as 'with a royal commission'; but the capitals and the use of Latin O (*mandatura*: the Greek title has omega) may suggest it was a less senior official, not a decree, that Eustathius came with.

3. Italy: The Norman Rainulf, not pleased with the growing power of Pandolf of Capua, forms an alliance with Duke Sergius of Naples and the Duke of Gaeta. Together they oust Pandolf from Naples and Sergius returns to power. Cf 1030.

1029-32:

Italy: Pothos Argyrus was the [catepan](#) from July 1029 (PBW under 1029). He replaced [Christophoros](#) and immediately had to deal with new [Saracen](#) assaults, first at Bari itself in the same month, when he was defeated by *Raica* (thus Lupus 57.43-44 and Anonymosu Barensis 149). In June 1032 Sicilian Muslims captured [Cassano allo Ionio](#) in Calabria, N of Cosenza. It seems (see below) that they penetrated into the heel ('the Land of Otranto') for it was there that Pothos was defeated (and probably killed) on 3 July 1032; he was replaced by the protospatharius* Michael (Lupus 57.45-46: wrongly dated to "1031").

(*) A high court title; not an office or post. According to the late ninth-century *Kleterologion* of Philotheos, the rank of patrikios was inferior to that of protospatharios. Cf. J.B. Bury, 'The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century', *The British Academy Supplemental Papers* 1, London: OUP 1911, p. 22.

"In the month of June 1031 [*correctly* 1032] the Saracens sieze Cassianus.* According to the Codex Andr.: in the Land of Otranto** on 3 July Pothos makes battle with the Saracens and the Greeks fall [i.e. are defeated]" (Lupus). – '*Anno 1031. mense Iulij comprehenderunt Sarraceni Cassianum. Cod. Andr. in terra Hydruntina, et tertio die mensis Iulij fecit proelium Potho cum Sarracenis, et ceciderunt Graeci.*' Online at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/protospatarius.shtml>.

(*) Probably Cassano allo Ionio in NE Calabria, whose name derives from that of the Cassianum estate. Not to be confused with Apulian Cassano, about equidistant between Gravino, Bari and Mottola.

(**) The lower heel of Italy.

Territory in 1030

The empire extended from the boot of Italy to Crete, Cyprus and Armenia. Nearly all of the Balkans, including Bulgaria, and the whole of Asia Minor acknowledged Constantinople.

In Italy there were a number of small "Lombard", i.e. non-Greek, principalities wedged between the German Empire (which nominally ruled Rome) and Byzantine Calabria-Apulia, the 'Catepanate of Italy'. From west to east they were: Capua, Salerno and Benevento. There were also three even smaller coastal Greco-Italian city-states which in earlier centuries recognised the suzerainty of Constantinople, but had long-since been self-determining, namely Gaeta, Naples and Amalfi. (Although fully independent, the rulers of Gaeta and Amalfi continued to accept court titles from the Eastern Empire into the 1030s: Patricia Skinner, *Family Power in Southern Italy: The Duchy of Gaeta and Its Neighbours, 850-1139*, 2003: note at page 100.)

Muslim-ruled Sicily was administered by the Kalbid dynasty of Zirid governors. With Tunisia and western Libya it constituted the 'Zirid emirate of Kairouan'. See 1037-38.

In the NW Balkans the Serbs were self-governing, but under Byzantium's suzerainty. All of the rest of the Balkans, including Bulgaria, was controlled by the empire. The Danube formed the empire's northern border with the pagan Patzinak Turks (Pechenegs) who controlled the trans-Danubian steppe.

All of Asia Minor was ruled by Constantinople, as far as Georgia and Armenia. As earlier, the border with the Muslim Levant lay in N Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, where the emirates of Aleppo (see 1030 below) and Diyarbakir constituted buffer states.

The Fatimids, a Shi'ite dynasty, ruled in Egypt and S Syria; and a further Shi'ite dynasty, the Buwayids in what is now Iraq.

c. 1030:

Fl. Bolli Bollason, ca.1004-after 1047, an Icelander who served in the Varangian Guard.

After spending some time in Demark, he proceeded to Constantinople. He subsequently returned to Iceland, possibly upon the death of Romanos II (1034). There Bollason "had on the clothes of fur [or velvet] which the 'Garth-king' [emperor] had given him; he had over all a scarlet [red] cape; and he had 'Footbiter' [or "Leg-Biter": the name of his sword] girt on him, the hilt of which was dight [inlaid] with gold, and the grip woven with gold [its pommel now gold-embossed and the hilt bound with gold], he had a gilded helmet on his head, and a red shield on his flank, with a knight painted on it in gold."

The right to bear a gold-hilted sword was one of the privileges of the court rank of "Manglabites" ['mace-bearer', senior bodyguard]*, and is taken as an indicator that Bolli held this rank (Jane Smiley, ed., *The Sagas of Icelanders*, Penguin 2001, p.419: bracketed words from other translations).

(*) Anciently derived from the Latin *manuclavium*, 'bludgeon', 'cudgel', hence 'club-wielder' (see ODB under 'manglabites').

1030:

1a. Syria: Romanus leads an army against Aleppo, an expedition that ends in disaster. He mustered a large and disorderly army, invaded the emirate in the worst heat of summer, lost 10,000 men in two ambushes, and fled.

Romanos had earlier made a splendid entry into Byzantine Antioch. He left Antioch (eastwards) towards Aleppo. Capture of Leon Choirosphaktes while scouting & rout of Konstantinos Dalassenos as he guarded foragers – Arab massacre of Romanos III's army near Azaz, NNW of Aleppo (thus PBW).

Skylitzes relates that Romanos III went to Azazion in Syria and sent Leon Choirosphaktes, patrikios and *archon* of the *Exkoubitoi*, the elite guards regiment, to spy on the Arabs, but Leon was captured. He then sent Konstantinos Dalassenos to face them, but Konstantinos, much to Romanos' and the army's dismay, was routed and nearly also captured.

But although Romanus was forced back, the next year (1031) his general George Maniakes will force Aleppo to recognise East Roman overlordship. Cf 1032, 1033, 1038.

Psellos: "By not keeping in close order, they [1030: the Muslims] created the illusion of great numbers, running about in scattered groups and with *no regular formations*. This so terrorized the Roman soldiery and spread such panic in this mighty and famous army, and so shattered their morale, that they all *ran away*, dressed just as they were, and not a thought did they give to anything but flight. Those who happened to be on horseback wheeled about and made off as fast as they could, while the rest did not even wait to mount their horses, but left them to the first master who claimed them, and every man, running off or wandering away, sought his own safety as best he could. It was an extraordinary sight. . . . First to feel the effects of the hubbub were *the Imperial Guards* [i.e. the *Exkoubitoi*]. Without so much as a backward glance, they deserted their emperor and fled".

1b. Syria: Georgios Maniakes, aged 33, held the post of strategos of Telouch, ancient Doliche, Tk: *Duluk*, near modern Gaziantep, north of Aleppo, on the road from Germanicia to Zeugma in ancient N Syria; now just inside Turkey (Skylitzes, 381). In 1030 he was wrongly told by an Arab force that Romanos III had been captured. Although only 800 strong, they ordered Maniakes to surrender Telouch. He pretended to acquiesce, sending them supplies, including wine. The next day, when they had drunk and fallen asleep, he killed them all. He captured 280 of their supply-laden camels and cut off the Arabs' ears and noses. These he took and presented to Romanos, who had fled to Cappadocia and was staying at Phokas' house. Romanos then appointed him catepan of Lower Media (HQ at Samosata) (PBW, citing Skylitzes 381.38-382.49).

2. Italy: The Norman warlord Rainulf, after 13 years of brigandage and mercenary service in Italy, becomes lord of Aversa, a small territory between Capua and Naples. Sergius, duke of Naples, cedes the county of Aversa to the Norman soldiers who have supported him in the struggles in Southern Italy. Rainulf marries Sergius's sister. The Normans will come to have a profound effect on this region.

Duke Sergius of Naples gives the town and territory of Aversa to Rainulfo

as payment for services fighting against Pandolf. Rainulfo later marries the sister of Sergius, the widow of the Duke of Gaeta. Aversa, therefore, became *the first territory in Italy that officially belonged to Normans*.

[Sergius IV of Naples](#) installed the leader [Rainulf Drengot](#) in the fortress of [Aversa](#) in 1029/30, which the latter fortified or refortified with walls. This gave the Normans their first base, allowing them to begin an organised conquest of the land.

1030: fl. [Ibn-Sina](#), known in the west as "Avicenna", Arabic physician and philosopher. Neo-platonist Aristotelianism. Wrote mainly in Arabic, but some works in Persian (Farsi).

At this time the Empire of Mahmud of Ghazni expanded west to conquer much of eastern Persia from the Buyids.

Born near Bukhara. He was based at the court of the Persian Samanids, but became a wanderer when that dynasty fell. He then settled at Rayy (now modern Teheran) before moving on to Hamadan and Isfahan. Finally, he returned to Hamadan where he died in 1037 A.D.

His "Book of Healing" or *Kitab al-Shifa* includes metaphysics; and his *Qanun* or "Canon of Medicine" is a medical encyclopaedia.

On the question of universals, Ibn Sina endorsed a form of realism that combined elements from Plato, Aristotle, and Philo.

1030/31-39: Collapse of Umayyid rule in al-Andalus. Muslim Spain splits into petty princedoms.

1030-32:

Upper Mesopotamia: As a reward for his defence of Telouch, Georgios Maniakes or George Maniaces was promoted to governor of Lower Media, the "theme of the Euphrates cities", with his HQ at Samosata. He leads attacks on the Muslim emirates of Aleppo and Diyarbakir. See next: 1031.

1030-70:

THE HIGHWATER-MARK: - BYZANTIUM WILL WEAKEN FROM WITHIN, BUT EXTERNALLY IT WILL MAINTAIN ITS POSITION AS THE DOMINANT POWER OF THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD, LOSING OUT ONLY IN SOUTHERN ITALY. See 1040 and 1060.

1031:

1. Ex-Fatimid Lebanon: Skylitzes relates that, after Symeon the drungarios and Niketas of Mistheia failed to take the fort of Menikos [Maniqa, south of Antioch, built in 1029], Romanos III appointed "the faithful" Theoktistos general and sent him with a large force to join the Arab defector and Byzantine ally 'Pinzarach' ("Apelzarach" or Abul' Garrah: Hassan ibn al-Mufarrij ibn al-Garrâh/Jarrah or 'Hassan ibn Mufraj ibn Daghfal ibn al-Jarrah'), the 'Bedouin'* emir of Tripoli, in Syria (modern Lebanon). Tripoli had defected from Egyptian rule (source: PBW). See 1033.

Hassan visited Constantinople later in 1031 and met Romanos.

(*) The Banu Jarrah were a clan of the Tayyi tribe, who in the late 900s entered Palestine, where the Fatimids of Egypt were extending their control. The Banu Jarrah were established from 971 in the region around Ramlah (but not yet in Ramlah itself) under Hasan's father Mufarrij b. Daghfal (d.1013). The Fatimids allowed them dominate Palestine until after 1013.

2. The East: Georgios Maniakes, strategos of 'the Euphratean cities', attacked Edessa and bribed its Turkish governor Salamanes (Salman, Sulayman), who surrendered the town to him (October 1031) (Skylitzes ed. Wortley p.365; Treadgold 1997: 585). Zonaras and Skylitzes say that Maniakes found in the city an autograph letter of Jesus (!) and sent it to Romanos III.

3. Or 1032: Calabria: The Romaics under the catepan Pothos Argyros are defeated by the Sicilian Saracens at Cassano allo Ionio (north of Cosenza in northern Calabria). Capture of Cassano by the Arabs, or as Metcalfe, p.80, has it, by "the Muslim-Apulian rebel coalition forces" (cf 1021-22 above). Later in Apulia: death of the catepan Pothos at the hands of the Arabs.

"Anno 1031. mense Iunij comprehenderunt Sarraceni Cassianum. Cod. Andr. In terra Hydruntina, et tertio die mensis Iulij fecit proelium Potho cum Sarracenis, et ceciderunt Graeci" (Lupus). – 'In June 1031 the Saracens capture Cassiano. ... [and] in the Land of Otranto, on 3 July Pothos gives battle to the Saracens, and the Greeks fall [are defeated].'

The protospatharios Michael succeeds (1032) Pothos as Byzantine catepan of Apulia. Michael was accompanied by Anatolikos *epi ton oikeiakon*, the minister or head of the imperial private treasury (or more exactly: of the public fiscal lands: see *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*).* One chronicle has 'Protospata with Ykiakon': *oikeiakon* or *epi ton oikiakon*, 'treasurer'.

(*) The *sekretos ton oikeiakon* was controller of state lands, i.e. tax-master of the tenants on the emperor's personal estates which included much of the recently conquered lands in SE and E Asia Minor (A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis aka Angeliki E. Laiou, *The Economic History of Byzantium*. 2008 edn, Dumbarton Oaks, p.992).

1031-32:

1. Syria/Mesopotamia: Muslim forces threaten Antioch; general Maniakes pushes them back (1031); and Romania (Byzantium) recaptures and annexes the major urban centre of Edessa [modern Urfa, W Turkey] (1032). Maniakes was in formal terms the *strategus* of the tiny 'theme of the Euphrates Cities'. Cf 1037.

In 1031 the citadel of Edessa, subject to the emirate of Mosul, is surrendered by Salamanes [Tk *Suleyman*; Ar. *Sulayman*], the Turkish envoy of the Kurdish emir Naser al Dawlah, to the Byzantine general George Maniakes. Salman received an annual pension and a patent of nobility from the Emperor. Salamanes was appointed *anthypatos* and *patrikios* and given estates in Byzantium. Later, the Romaic garrison took possession also of the city proper. See 1037.

'Apomerbanes' [Ibn Marwan], emir of Martyropolis [modern Silvan near Amida/Diyarbakir], failed, despite the strength of his army, to oust Maniakes from the three towers the latter held in Edessa. So Apomerbanes destroyed the Great Church and much of the city, killed its citizens and returned to Martyropolis with his camels laden with booty.

A soldier 'of the Russian people' (presumably an officer of the Varangian Guard) sent by Maniakes on an errand to the Emir at Harran, lost his temper with the Emir and struck at him with his axe. Cf 1033.

2. Famine in Asia Minor and Armenia. Cf 1035.

3. Sicilian Arabs invaded Byzantine Calabria, killed (1031 or 1032) the catepan Pothos Argyrus at Cassano, and raided Corcyra. The imperial naval forces, including a squadron from Ragusa (Dubrovnik), defeat (1032) the Saracen pirates who had been plundering along the coastline of Illyria and Corfu.

1031-33:

Michael the protospatharios (Italian: Michele Protospatario) was the Byzantine catepan of Italy; he arrived in Italy in 1032. His titles were (see next entry) "chamberlain, catepan of Italy, and *krites* of the *velon* and the Hippodrome" (one of the junior judges of the imperial lawcourts). —Jules Gay, *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire Byzantin: Livre II*. Burt Franklin: New York, 1904. "Junior judge": Andreas Gkoutzioukostas, 'Judges of the Velum and Judges of the hippodrome in Thessalonike (11th C.)', *Byzantina simeikta* (2010) 67-84.

1032:

1. Goergia: The Byzantine princess Helena Argyropoulaina, niece of [Romanus III Argyrus](#), 1028-1034, married Bagrat of Georgia in 1032/1033 as his first wife. Though she died shortly afterwards, she may have had an influence in 'hellenising' the Georgian court.

2. Italy: The catepanate continued to be governed by officials of the highest rank. A new Catepan arrived in 1032: the protospatharios Michael, "*krites* of the *velon* & of the hippodrome" [i.e. a junior judge at the lawcourts in Constantinople*], and "*epi ton oikeiakon*", which is to say: sometime head of the imperial private treasury. (A seal of his has survived.) His deputy was Anatolikos. Michael's appointment was possibly a promotion or transfer from the post of commander of the Watch regiment.*

One of his seals survives, inscribed "Michael, *protospatharios epi tou Chrysotriklinou* [master of the palace hall],** *koitonites* [chamberlain], *krites* of the hippodrome / and of the *velon* [a junior judge of the imperial lawcourts], *epi ton oikeiakon* [minister of state finances], and katepano of Italy".

—http://linnet.cch.kcl.ac.uk:8080/seals/seals_boulloterion.jsp?bKey=44.

(*) The ODB notes that the office of Drungary of the Watch (commander of the regiment of that name) assumed significant judicial responsibilities after ca. 1030, its holder becoming the president or vice-president (*krites*, judge) of the imperial court of the *Velon*, housed at the

"Covered Hippodrome" adjoining the imperial palace, in which capacity it survived until the end of the Empire (ODB: 663).

Per contra: krites as one of many lesser judges: Andreas Gkoutzioukostas, 'Judges of the Velum and Judges of the hippodrome in Thessalonike (11th C.)', *Byzantina simeikta* (2010) 67-84.

(**) The Chrysotriklinos was the main reception hall of the imperial palace. Thus the dignity of *epi tou (ton) Chrysotriklinou* meant 'head of palace receptions'. That it was a dignity and not a post is clear from the fact that even the Serbian leader received the title in 1039: Ljutovid, the "protospatharios epi tou Chrysotriklinou, hypatos, [and] strategos" of "Serbia and Zahumlje".

Michael arrived early in [1032](#) with a new army, composed not only of recruits from the [West](#) or the [auxiliaries](#), but also some from the first-class troops of [Asia Minor](#) and [Syria](#). It is unknown what became of this presumably substantial army, however, as Michael was replaced in 1033 by Konstantinos [Opos](#).

Lupus: "*Anno 1032. descendit Ichiacon* [sic: poor transliteration of 'Oikeiakon', household or private treasurer to the Emperor*], *et Chetoniti*,** *et secum adduxit ipsos Anacolichium*". – 'The Oikeiakon [i.e. Michael the Treasurer] arrives, and [who is also called] the Koitonites [senior courtier]** and with him he brings those [troops] of the Anatolikon' [the central province in Asia Minor].

(*) The *sekreton ton oikeiakon* was controller of state lands, i.e. tax-master of the tenants on the emperor's personal estates (A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis aka Angeliki E. Laiou, *The Economic History of Byzantium*. 2008 edn, Dumbarton Oaks, p. 992).

(**) Lupus also uses this tag earlier under Anno 1028: "*descendit Oresti Chetoniti mense Aprilis*". The Greek is *Koitonites*, the title of a courtier serving in the emperor's bedchamber; from Gk *koiton* 'bedroom'.

Italy: Pandulf IV of *Capua* turned his attention to Sergius of Naples' old ally, [John V of Gaeta](#). He [conquered Gaeta](#) and took the old [consular and ducal title](#) of its ruler. These injustices and many other outrages soon repelled his obvious ally, [Guaimar IV of Salerno](#), the son of Guaimar III (who died in 1027). For all this, Pandulf was called by the chronicler [Aimé \[sic: Amatus\] of Monte Cassino](#) a *fortissime lupe*, the *Wolf of the Abruzzi*, a man of "wily and wicked deeds". —Wikipedia, 2011: 'Pandulf IV of Capua', quoting Amato of Montecassino (Amatus Casinensis).

1032-34:

Asia Minor: *Four* successive years of poor harvests: locusts and famine and then plague. According to Cedrenus, in 1032-33 the themes [provinces] of Kappadokia, Paphlagonia and Armeniakon, along with the region of Honorias (northern Anatolia) suffered famine and pestilence (Hendy, *Monetary* p.145).

1033:

1. Syria and Egypt: The protospatharios Theoktistos' led a land expedition to help Emir 'ibn Zairah' of Tripoli against the Fatimid caliph of Egypt. His troops included Varangians.

Skylitzes relates that Romanos III also sent 'Tekneas' of Abydos, also a protospatharios, to Egypt to attack Alexandria and the Delta (spring 1033). The fleet sailed straight to Alexandria, captured many vessels, took much booty, and returned unharmed. The aim was probably to hasten the Fatimids into signing a truce in Syria (PBW under 'Tekneas'; Skylitzes, trans Wortley p.366).

2. Catepan of Italy: AD 1033-38: 'Constantine the protospatharius, known as Opus, who was loved by [the aging empress] Zoe, according to Skylitzes': *Constantinus Protospatha, cognomine Opo. Cuius amore Zoe capta, apud Scylitzem*. – Evidently Leo Opus was the same person as Constantine Opus.

Cf Psellus: "He [Constantine] was secretary once to the emperor Romanus, and not only succeeded in impressing the great man with his administrative ability, but also won the *approval* of Zoe by his *charming* manners" (*Chronographia* VI: 13).

Konstantinos Opos (called Leon by Skylitzes) went to Italy as katepano, reaching Bari on 1 May 1033 (date in Lupus). He had particular charge of the army, replacing Orestes (?), while Ioannes, an old eunuch servant, i.e. high official [cubicularius], of Basil II, according Skylitzes 389.57, commanded the fleet (Cedr. II 503; PBW).

1033-34:

Palestine: Fearing Byzantine incursions, the Fatimids surround Jerusalem with a new wall.

1033-36:

Lower Danube region: Byzantine war with the Pechenegs (Tk *Pechenekler*, Gk *Patzinakoi*). P. was – the language is extinct – an Oghuz Turkic tongue.

The lower Danube constituted the border between the Theme of Paradunavum or Dristra (Byzantine northern Bulgaria) and the Pecheneg realm.

1033-37:

Italy: In the summer of 1033 (or 1034) catepan Constantine Opus/Opos proceeds to Calabria with John (Ioannes) the Cubicularius, commander of the fleet, in order to remove the Saracens: the conflict drags on for years, punctuated by negotiation and truces.

1034:

Romanus' unexpected death in 1034 was supposed to have been due to poison administered by his wife Zoe, though it has also been alleged that he was drowned on his wife's orders while bathing (Cedrenus: at "*one of the baths* situated near the imperial quarters"). He was perhaps 66.

Cedrenus (733, p. 505) definitely asserts that Romanus was being slowly poisoned by Zoe. But Cedrenus (ibid.) also notes that he was drowned

deliberately by friends of the future emperor Michael. The date was 12 April 1034 (Good Friday). The emperor was over 60 years of age.

"Zoe", says Garland, "considered that she had wasted enough of her youth and, after possibly trying to have [Romanus](#) poisoned, grew impatient for his termination and on Good Friday (11 April) 1034 had him drowned in his bath by [her lover] [Michael's](#) attendants. She came in, took one look to make sure that he was actually dying, and swept out to marry [Michael](#) and set him on the throne that same night." – Lynda Garland, 'Zoe', http://www.roman-emperors.org/zoep.htm#N_9_; accessed 2011.

1034-41: MICHAEL IV 'the Paphlagonian'

Aged about 24, Michael married 56 year old Princess Zoe. He was installed by his older brother, the power behind the throne: the eunuch John 'the Orphanotrophus', head of the imperial orphanage, aged about 39.

His was a family of eunuchs: Michael IV had four brothers, three of whom were eunuchs: Constantine, George, and the powerful John. Only Michael and Nicetas were not.

A capable ruler of poor health, Michael dispatched armies that fought hard battles to subdue rebel Slavs in Macedonia and Serbia. But he died before launching a planned campaign against prince Stefan Vojislav, the founder of the most significant 11th c. Serbian state of Zeta, located around present-day Montenegro.

Michael's was the last reign in which were minted *nomismata* containing the proper amount of gold.

John the Orphanotrophus had been a *protonotary* (head of the civil administration of a theme, and subordinate only to the strategus, or provincial governor) under Basil II. He had four brothers: Michael, Nicetas, Constantine and George, the last two like himself being eunuchs. The family came from Paphlagonia and appears to have been occupied in some disreputable business. Cedrenus (733, p. 504) hints that they were even engaged in forgery. Through John's influence with the emperor Romanus III Argyrus, Michael had been promoted *Archon of the Pantheon*, an office of doubtful meaning, but probably a Court appointment (notes to Psellos, *Chronographia* III, at www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/psellus-chrono00.html; accessed 2008).

1034:

1. Incursions by Arabs, Pechenegs and Serbs.

2. "The greatest Varangian of them all" (Obolensky): The 19-years-old Norwegian prince Haraldr (Harold) Sigurdarson or Sigurdsson—posthumously called **Harold 'Hardrada'** [Hardråde]: 'hard ruler' or 'the ruthless'—arrives

with a Varangian detachment of 500 "valiant soldiers" or "noblemen" via Kiev/Kyiv to Constantinople (the number as given in the Greek source, 'Cecaumeni Strategicon': Jones, Vikings p.104). The extravagant word "noblemen" is Kekaumenos's, but no doubt they were all elite warriors.

The saga-writer Snorri Sturlusson said Harald '*served on the galleys with the force that went into the Grecian Sea*', meaning the Aegean. He was employed for nine years by three emperors (Obolensky p.306).

The geographical meaning of 'Varangia' as Scandinavia has been brought out most clearly in a passage in the Book of Advice which is annexed to the *Strategicon* of Cecaumenus. In § 246 (p. 97, ed. Vasilievski and Jernstedt), Harold Hadrada is called the "son [step-son] of the king of Varangia," hence: Norway.

3. Armenia: The commander of the Romaic force which put down a rebellion of King Adam of Sebaste had the rank of *Akolouthos*, the title of the commander of the Varangians. Cf English 'acolyte', lit. "server", "companion" or "follower".

Varangians are also recorded in the Thrakesion theme - in winter quarters during a campaign. **First use of the term 'Varangian Guard' in**

Byzantine sources: "*Palatio Varangoi*" in Cedrenus, Book II. Cf 1035.

Western Mediterranean: Italians vs Berbers: Pisan attack on the Muslim port of Bona, just inside present-day Algeria - the Zirid Emirate of Kairouan.

From 1034:

Serious raids by Pechenegs across the Danube.

1034-35:

1. Italy: The emperor sent reinforcements with the *protospatharios* Michael and the new catepan Constantine [Leo] Opos in 1033-34.

2. The central Mediterranean: In this period the ships of the *strategos* of Nauplia [Nafplion], Nikephoros Karantenos, and the fleet of the chamberlain John swept the seas and eliminated the pirate threat. The Ragusans aided Nikephoros on at least once occasion (PBW under 'NK', citing Skylitzes 386.59-62). Once the emperor saw he was dominant on the seas, he felt comfortable in negotiating with the Arabs of Sicily and their Emir al-Akhal. In August 1035 the diplomat (and eunuch) George Probatas signed a peace treaty in name of the Basileus that conceded the title Emir and *magistros* to al-Akhal.

Skylitzes 386.84-387.86 writes of "1,000" Saracen vessels in a fleet opposed by Karantenos, an unlikely number. But plainly the Muslims were still strong at sea, until at least 1033. According to A L Lewis, by 1100 the fleets of Muslim Spain, Sicily and North Africa "simply disappeared, leaving only a scattering of ships that could be mustered for warlike purposes" (*Nomads and Crusaders*, Indiana University Press 1988: 103).

c.1035:
Present-day Montenegro: The Serbs of Duklja, also known as Zeta, refused homage to Romania (Byzantium). Byzantine troops were sent from Dyrrhachium; the Serb prince Vojislav was captured and taken off to Constantinople, and Duklja was put under the strategos of Dyrrhachium. This lasted for only a few years. Vojislav escaped in about 1038, returned and *began to re-liberate Duklja* using guerrilla warfare from mountain strongholds (Vine 1991: 203).

Theatres of War, 1025-44:

Date	Sicily	Italy	S Balkans, Aegean	N Balkans	Armenia	Syria
1025		Capua: Norman, Lombard, Byzantine siege Capua				
1026			N: Cyclades			
1027		Apulia	çéMuslim raids			
1028						
1029	Sicily					Byzantium aids Tripoli against Fatimids:
1030						Syria Aleppo
1031		Cassano, Calabria				
1032		éMuslim raids				
1033				Pecheneg wars:		Egypt – delta.
1034		N: Adriatic		Danube Danube	Armenian rebellion: Sebaste	
1035			N: Cyclades	Serb revolt: Montenegro	Armenia	(Naval)
103						

6 103 7	Post-Kalbid invasion			Montenegro	
103 8	N: Sicily Messina	Lombard-Norman revolt: Campania, Bari			
103 9	Syracuse				
104 0	Troina	Mottola, Ascoli		Bulgarian revolt: Skopje	
104 1	Syracuse	Ofanto Valley		Thessalonica, Prilep	War of the Armenian Inheritance: Ani
104 2		Taranto, Matera	Rus attack on Constantinople		CW: Cyprus
104 3			CW: Maniakes' revolt		
104 4:		Calabria			

N: naval action. CW: civil war.

c.1035-44:

Period in which the young Norwegian prince Harold Hardrada served in the Varangian Guard (cf 1038). Hardrada is said to have brought 500 troops with him to Constantinople (Davidson p.209).

Greek name: *Araltes*. *Hardradi* was his future nickname, meaning "the ruthless" or "hard" in Norse. He was afterwards king of Norway, and was killed invading England in 1066.

Surnamed *Haardraade*, which might be translated "hard reign", he was the step-son of King Sigurd and half-brother of King Olaf 'the Saint'. He served for some years with the Russian king Yaroslav before arriving in Byzantium – aged about 20 – in 1034 or 1035. Cf 1037-46: cathedral of Kiev.

The term Varangian Guard, "*Palatio Varangoi*", is first recorded in 1034, although the unit itself dated from 988 (see earlier).

Heath proposes the guard numbered 6,000 before 1071 but was probably smaller, say about 3,000 men, over the next few centuries (Heath 1976: 11; Treadgold, *State* pp.537, 680).

1035:

1. The Aegean: Renewed hostilities in the East included a naval battle in 1035, in which *one of the last west-Muslim (Sicilo-Tunisian) fleets to appear in the Aegean* was defeated (Hocker in Gardiner 2004: 93). The patrikios Constantine Chage, admiral of the Cibyrrhaeots [SW Asia Minor], and other commanders attacked and defeated Muslim Africans and Sicilians (Zirids/Kalbids) who were raiding the Cyclades and the coasts of the Thrakesion. Five hundred prisoners were sent alive to Michael IV, while many others were thrown into the sea or exposed ("impaled")* along the Asia Minor shore from Adramyttion to Strobilos (PBW, citing Skylitzes; trans. Wortley p.375). Cf 1042.

Byzantine and especially Italian fleets (Venice, Genoa, Pisa) dominated the West Mediterranean after this time. For Byzantine fleets, see under 1037.

A L Lewis says that by 1100 the fleets of Muslim Spain, Sicily and North Africa "simply disappeared, leaving only a scattering of ships that could be mustered for warlike purposes" (*Nomads and Crusaders*, Indiana University Press 1988: 103).

(*) "Impaling" (Gk *anaskolopismos*) meant being tied up and exposed on a forked stake, and *not* having the stake inserted into or through one's body (Notes to Leo the Deacon, trans. Talbot & Sullivan p.155). Thus Skylitzes (Wortley p.319) writes of Delphinas being "hung on a [forked] gallows" [Gk *phourka*] in 989. One source says he was crucified (Stephen of Taron, cited by Holmes in Magdalino 2003: 49); but Constantine the Great had abolished crucifixion and replaced it with hanging on the phourka (a fork-shaped gallows) and execution by the sword: ODB 2:768, 3:1622; Rautman 2006, 30-31. Presumably it was thirst that killed the 'forked' victim.

2. Armenia: The region NE of Lake Van was contested between Byzantium and the Kurdish (Rawawid) Emirate of Azerbaijan. A Byzantine force, including Varangians, under the new catepan of Vaspurakan, the patrikios Nicetas or Nicholas Pegonites ["Nikolaos Pegonitissa"], captured the Kurdish-held fort at Berkri or Perkri after a long siege. Harald Hardarda was among the Varangians. "Few episodes from this period demonstrate better the resolve of the Byzantine government to control Armenia at all cost", says Blaum 2006: 106.

3. Italy: 3a. *August 1035*: The eunuch George Probatas was sent to Sicily by Michael IV to conclude a treaty with the emir, Ahmad ibn Yusuf 'al-Akhal' (Cedrenus II 513). See 1036.

3b. Revolt and civil war in Muslim Sicily. This was coloured by ethnic tension between Sicilian Arabs and Sicilian Berbers. Civil war rages in Sicily between the Kalbid emir *Apolaphar* Mouchoumet [Abu'l-'afar or Abu Ja'far, called *al-Akhal*, 'the Dark'*] and his brother 'Apochaps' [i.e. Abu ^kHafs].

(*) "Abu'l'afar" or "Abu Ja'far" means 'father of Ja'far'. There were two Ja'fars: al-Akhal's *brother* and al-Akhal's *son*. The emir Yusuf, when incapacitated by a stroke in 998, stepped down in favour of his eldest

son Jafar [Ja'far b. Yusuf, called *Taj al-Dawla*, 'crown of the state']. In 1019 the aged Yusuf (called *Ta'yid al-Dawla*, 'aid of the state') deposed Jafar in favour of another son Ahmad (Ahmad b. Yusuf, *Abu Ja'far*, 'al-Akhal', also called *Asad al-Dawla*, 'lion of the state'), the father of a different Ja'far. Abu Hafs was yet another son of Yusuf (details in Moshe Gil, David Strassler, *Jews in Islamic countries in the Middle Ages*, Brill, 2004 p.545).

Apochaps has the support of "Oumer" [correctly: al-Muizz ibn Badis*], the Zirid ruler in Africa, who is promised territory on the island. The Zirid ruler sends (summer of 1036) 6,000 troops from Africa under his son Abdallah to aid Abu Hafs (Norwich, *South* p.46; also Norwich *Apogee* p.284). (*) Only Skylitzes used the name "Oumer" (trans. Wortley p.378); it is unclear whether he means the father (al-Muizz) or the son (Abdallah).

In Chalandon's account, Al-Akhal was persuaded to support the 'African' party (recent immigrants), while his brother Abu Hafs put himself at the head of the 'Sicilian' party (island-born Muslims). In AH 427 (= 5 November 1035-24 October 1036) Abu Hafs asked Muezz [al-Muizz'] ibn Badis, the Zirid 'khalif' of Kairouan, for support, threatening, in the event of refusal, to deliver the island to the Greeks. Muizz sent aid in the form of "3,000" men, commanded by his son Abd Allah.

The emir has (since the treaty of 1035) the support of Leon or Constantine Opos, the Romaic catepan of Italy, who thereafter leads (1037) a force of Lombard mercenaries (or should we call them 'paid volunteers'?). This Lombard force is able to best the African mercenaries and hold them in check.

Ahmed Al-Akhal, Emir of Sicily, leader of the "African" (Arab) party, failing to suppress a revolution of the "Sicilians" (Berbers) under his brother Abu-Hafs, turned to Constantinople and recognised the old supremacy of the Greeks, while his brother brought in an army of "6,000" men under Abdallah, son of the Zirid Sultan of 'Tunis'. The final result was that Abdallah dispossessed both Ahmed and Abu-Hafs and reigned in person in Palermo.

4. Fourth straight year of poor harvests. Cf 1037 - famine.

Returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Robert 'the Magnificent', duke of Normandy, father of William 'the Conqueror', dies at Nicaea.

1035-56: Muslim north-west Africa: Rise of the hardline Almoravids or *al-Murabitun*, under Mauritanian leadership.

1036:

1. Sicily: As already noted, the Sicilian rebels respond by calling on the Zirid overlord Emir al-Muizz ibn Badis of Ifriqiya. The Zirids leap at the chance and dispatch (early 1036) a good sized expeditionary force (6,000 men) under al-Muizz's son, Abdallah ibn al-Muizz. This time it is Ahmed (emir Ahmad II, ibn Abi'l-Futuh Yusuf, called "al-Akhal") who appeals to the Byzantines for help. See 1037.

Ahmed al-Akhal captures his brother and rebel leader Abu ^kHafs Gk (Apochaps). He also pays off the Greeks with a nice treaty. Curious as it may seem to us, Ahmed was granted the Byzantine military title of *magistros* by the Emperor.

2. Dalmatia: Gregorio, the prior and proconsul at Zadar since 1033, receives the grand title of *protospatario e stratego* ("commander") *dell'universa* ("of all") *Dalmazia*. This was, says Praga (*Dalmatia* p.72), a sure sign that in his person the Empire had restored the integrity of the Theme and the dignity of the *strategos*.

3. Jerusalem: Following a fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Emperor agrees with the Caliph that Romania (Byzantium) should pay for its restoration. Hardrada is said to have visited Jerusalem, and, if the Byzantine craftsmen were sent under a special guard unit, he may have been in it (Davidson p.219).

Catepans of Italy: (a) Leo [Constantine] Opos, A. C. 1037. (b) Nicephorus, qui et *Dokino* [Dokeianos], A. C. 1039.

1037:

1. Muslim Sicily: Emperor Michael IV sent the catepan Constantine Leo Opos (1037) with a fleet to aid the Kalbid ruler Ahmed (al-Akhal) against the Zirids, which, after varying fortunes, was forced to retire. See further under 1037-38.

The civil war in Sicily ends when the emir Apolaphar Mouchoumet [Abu J'afar, i.e. al-Akhal] and his brother Apochaps [Abu Hafs] (almost) reconcile their differences (the peace talks failed). The emir's ally, the catepan Leo Opos, withdraws from Sicily with his mainly Lombard forces. Upon this departure, Oumer [Abd Allah], Apochap's African ally, is now free to despoil Sicily without opposition.

In Chalandon's account, when the relieving army commanded by Abd Allah arrived (1036), Al Akhal appealed to Leo Opos, catepan of Italy, asking him for the help. A body of Greek troops under the command of the catepan crossed (1037) to Sicily, but it was soon forced, or chose, to cross back over the 'strait of Faro' [It. *punta del Faro*, Strait of Messina]. If we follow the chronicle of Skylitzes, Opos returned when he was informed of the negotiations begun between Al Akhal and his brother Abu Hafs. The brief expedition by the Byzantines enabled them to bring back "15,000" Christians, which they duly did. (Chalandon sees this figure as highly exaggerated.) Deserted by his allies, Al Akhal continued the civil war, but he was soon captured and assassinated.

2. Famine in Asia Minor: to feed the capital, the state purchased substitute wheat from Hellas and the Peloponnese.

3. Syria/western Iraq: The Numayrids of Harran formally restore ex-Byzantine Edessa to *Rhomanिया*/Byzantium; and the Mirdasids of Aleppo renew their

subordination to Constantinople.

4. Dalmatia: After the subordination of Bulgaria, pressure on the Serbs came only from the Byzantine Empire, especially from its bastions in Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and Drac, and the centres of Serbian resistance were formed in the vicinity of those towns.

Serbian Illyria:

Around 1035, Stefan Vojislav asserted full independence for Duklja. At first defeated and taken prisoner to Constantinople, with his realm annexed, he managed to escape, return and rekindle the struggle. By 1040 his state stretched in the coastal region (i.e. today's coastal Montenegro) from Ston in the north, near the modern border with Croatian Dalmatia, down to the Lake of Skadar/Scutari on the modern Montenegro-Albania border, where he set up his capital, with other courts in Trebinje, Kotor and Bar.

Kekaumenos in his *Taktika* mentions the *dromones* (war-galleys) commanded by the Byzantine strategos of Ragusa, who deployed them against Serbian raiders in the Adriatic (Pryor & Jeffreys p.408).

Under Prince Stefan Vojislav, 1037-1051, the Serbs in present-day Montenegro, which was medieval Duklja – Greek *Diokleis*, Latin *Doclea*: Zeta; - and in Zahumlje – the coastal region: our Herzegovina, - managed briefly to overthrow East Roman rule. Cf 1042.

Avicenna, Arabic *Ibn Sina*, 980-1037, Islamic philosopher and physician, of Persian origin, b. near Bukhara. He was the most influential name in medicine from 1100 to 1500. His medical masterpiece was the *Canon of Medicine*. His other major work, the *Book of Healing*, is a philosophical treatise dealing with the soul.

Avicenna was responsible for bringing Aristotle's works into the wider European consciousness (if we may correctly speak of 'Europe' before the rise of the Ottomans), when his works were translated into Latin in the 1100s. His psychology and theory of knowledge influenced the Latin scholars William of Auvergne and Albertus Magnus, while his metaphysics had a major impact on the thought of Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274.

1037-46:

Imperial craftsmen build the cathedral of St Sophia in Kiev for Prince Yaroslav.

By 1071 there were eight Russian principalities including that of 'Great Kiev'. There was no border with the empire: travellers had to cross the present-day Ukrainian steppe through Patzinak and Cuman-controlled territory, or go via Hungary.

1037-38:

Muslim Sicily: Discord broke out among the Kalbite or Kalbid magnates, and anarchy resulted: "every *alcalde* and petty captain", says the *Catholic Encyc.*, "aspired to independence".

Encouraged by this, the Emperor Michael IV sent the catepan Leo [Constantine] Opus (1037) with a fleet, which, as we have noted, after varying fortunes, was forced to retire.

According to the PBW, George (Georgios) Maniakes was sent as early as "1035" to be supreme commander of Southern Italy, probably by Michael IV. The true date, presumably, was 1037, immediately before the two warring brothers, al-Akhal and Abu Hafs, began inconclusive peace talks, or else this is a misreading of the events of Maniakes' Sicilian expedition in late 1038. He held the position of strategos autokrator in Longobardia, with Stephanos, uncle of Michael IV, at the head of the fleet. He was to support the emir Apolaphar Mouchoumet [al-Akhal], who was involved in a civil war against his brother Apochaps [Abu Hafs], but Maniakes's forces proved inadequate and were supposedly *annihilated* by Apochaps' ally "Oumer" [Al-Muizz ibn Badis], the Zirid ruler of Tunisia-Libya.

In 1038 the Sicilian rebels capture Khalisa, the inner fortress of Palermo, and there Ahmad al-Akhal (who had asked Constantinople for aid) makes his last stand. Ahmad's head is sent to the Zirid prince Abdallah ibn Muizz. This prompts Michael to send (mid 1038) George Maniakes [aged 40] with an army which contained some Normans - mercenaries serving in Calabria. According to Ahmad (p.33), "15,000" Sicilian Christians took up arms to aid Maniakes' army.

"Anno 1038. Descendit Michael Patricius et Dux qui et Sfrondili vocabatur et transfretavit cum Maniachi Patricio in Siciliam". - 'Michael the patrikios and doux*, who is also called Sphondyles, arrives, and he has crossed, with the patrikios Maniakes, to Sicily'. —*Lupus*.

(*) Michael had lately been doux of Antioch.

Messina and Syracuse were taken, and the Arabs were badly defeated near Troina. See more below. Skylitzes says that following Maniakes' defeat of the Sicilian brothers' African (Saracen) troops, his army captured "13 cities", meaning the towns in the region south of Rametta, and occupied "the entire island" (Skylitzes 403.28-30), but this was an exaggeration. At best the whole eastern littoral was captured.

The new campaign, in which a number of Norman soldiers also took part, opened with a series of comfortable victories, and it was not long before Messina and Syracuse, with all the eastern part of Sicily between them, fell into the hands of the Greeks. But Maniakes in this hour of triumph was rewarded only by the jealousy and suspicion of his imperial master and was recalled to the Romaic court, there to languish in disgrace (Kendrick 2004/1930: 173). See 1042.

1038:

1. S Italy: Ranulph or Rainulph Drengot, the Norman count of Aversa (N of Naples), after besting the Byzantines in a battle in 1038, - 20 years after the debacle of Cannae - declared himself 'prince' (R. Allen Brown, *The Normans*, Boydell & Brewer 1994, p.103). This formalised his independence from Naples and from his former Lombard allies. He conquered his neighbour and former suzerain Pandulf's principality of Capua, and the Western emperor Conrad approved the union of the two domains, which formed one of the larger polities in southern Italy.

Guaimar IV of Salerno, seeing an opportunity, asked the two emperors—Eastern and Western—to come and resolve the many disputes rupturing Southern Italy. Only Conrad accepted, and he came to [Troia](#) in N Apulia in 1038. He ordered Pandulf of Capua to restore stolen property to the monastery of [Monte Cassino](#). Pandulf sent his wife and son to ask for peace, giving 300 lbs of gold (in two installments) and a son and daughter as hostages. The emperor accepted Pandulf's offer, but the filial hostage escaped and Pandulf holed up in his outlying 'castle' [walled village] of [Sant'Agata dei Goti](#) (well east of Capua, on the upper reaches of the Garigliano River). Conrad took Capua and gave it to Guaimar of Salerno along with the title of Prince. He also recognised Aversa as a county of Salerno (Wikipedia, 2008, 'Conrad II').

2. Capua: fl. the Jewish leader Paltiel ben Samuel, 988-1048, father of Ahimaaz Ben Paltiel, b. Capua 1017, the author of a famous family chronicle written in rhymed prose. It covers the period 850-1054 and ranges across Oria, Bari, Otranto, Gaeta, Benevento, Capua, and Amalfi.

Land, Local Recruits and Imported Soldiers in Byzantine Italy

Note: The Lombard language was already many centuries extinct; despite their Germanic names, the so-called Lombards spoke a variety of Romance, i.e. a kind of proto-Italian.

Chalandon, p37: "*A mon avis, ce sont ces milices locales qui expliquent la réussite de la conquête normande. Les chroniqueurs, . . . , nous montrent toujours les premiers normands, au nombre de quelques centaines, mettant en fuite des milliers de Byzantins. Il est invraisemblable de voir une troupe, aussi peu nombreuse, être toujours victorieuse d'un ennemi bien supérieur. Tout le côté merveilleux de la conquête normande disparaît presque en entier, si l'on songe au rôle joué par les milices locales. Lorsque les Lombards se révoltèrent, ils trouvèrent dans leurs milices le noyau d'une armée parfaitement organisée et équipée. Si l'on songe que les Normands ont été soutenus par toutes les milices de la Pouille, on voit que cet appui dont les chroniqueurs ne parlent pas, a été en réalité la véritable cause de leurs succès.*"

"In my opinion, it is the local [Lombard] militia which explains the success of the Norman conquest. The chroniclers, . . . always show us the first Normans, numbering just a few hundred, putting to flight thousands of Byzantines. It not credible to see a band of men so few in number always victorious against a much superior enemy. The miraculous (*merveilleux*, "marvellous, fabulous") element in the Norman conquest disappears almost entirely if one reflects on the part played by the local militia. When the Lombards revolted, they found in their militia the core of a well organised and equipped army. If one reflects that the Normans were supported by the whole militia of Apulia, one may see that this support, about which the chroniclers are silent*, was actually the true cause of their success." – My translation, MO'R.

(*) But cf the notes by l'Abbé Oddon Delarc to his 1892/93 edn of *Amatus*: » *Il est certain que les Apuliens, révoltés contre Constantinople, ceux qu'on désignait sous le nom de Conterati* [Gk *kontaratoi*], *ont combattu avec les Normands; d'après Lupus, il y aurait eu, dès le début* [i.e. before 1041], *neuf Apuliens et, d'après Guillaume de Pouille, trois pour un Normand.*" – 'It is certain that the Apulians, having revolted against Constantinople, those designated by the name 'conterati' [*kontaratoi*, Lombard *militiamen*], fought alongside the Normans; according to Lupus, there may have been from the beginning [i.e. before 1041], *nine Apulians*, and, according to William of Puglia/Apulia three, *for each Norman.*"

As Rodriguez explains, the defensive system of the empire's Italian themes or provinces was based on the military autonomy of each region, and only at moments of crisis or in the case of major expeditions were troops called in from other regions.

The pressing necessities of defence of the Italian provinces exceeded the capacity of the local military services; this meant the almost constant presence of troops brought in from other parts of the Empire. Or we might say that the progressive professionalisation of the Byzantine army from the mid 10th century (after 950) reduced the importance of enlisting Italian (mainly Lombard) recruits.

In the course of the 11th century we still find the locals being enrolled as light infantry militiamen: *kontaratoi* or *conterati*, literally 'spear carriers', as they are called in the sources. But now they are of little military value. In their place the battles were now fought mainly by soldiers of exotic origins: Varangian-Russians, Armenians and Vlachs as well as an ample representation from the Eastern (Asia Minor) themes. And it seems that more of the senior officer caste was drawn from the regiments of Constantinople. Among the officials documented in the sources for Italy we find abundant references to members of the Tagmata of the Scholae and Excubitores and men called *Manglabites* [a title held by imperial bodyguards, often Varangians*] and also, as of 1040, there are references to *Pantheotai***, outposted members of a unit of the palace guard of Constantinople, performing functions of a judicial character (—thus writes Rodriguez, at (2009) www.imperiobizantino.com/italia/Italia_Bizantina.pdf).

(*) Harold Hardrada, for example, held the office of *Manglabite*. It was derived anciently from the Latin *manuclavius*, 'wooden club or bludgeon'. So perhaps best rendered 'Mace-bearer'.

(**) Mace-bearing "police"; named for the Pantheon hall in the palace.

The economic base of the army was the *strateia*, a military duty or service placed on certain land-owners that from the end of the 10th century was progressively turned into a payment of money. In return for supplying a soldier, the land was held tax-free. In practice only rarely did the possessor of a *stratitikon ktema* or military holding represent a serving soldier, although the land-owner was responsible for the cost of the acquisition and

maintenance of armaments by the state treasury. This explains why so frequently we find clergymen in a *ktemata* (theme) in possession of *stratitika* (military lands) and therefore subject to the payment of *strateia*.

There were large, medium and small landowners. In the Latin sources, the terminology used for the big landholders is *maiores* or *nobiles*, 'the major ones', 'nobles'. The *mediani* were middle rankers; and the *minores* or *cunctus populus*: 'the lesser ones', 'the body of the people'. These labels derived from the Lombard laws according to which the population was divided in three classes based on its economic capacity for war.

According to this scheme:

[1:] the *maiores* or 'powerful' were those who had, or could afford, horses plural, armour, helmets and lances and enjoyed the benefit of at least seven properties.

As noted in the Introduction to this chronology, Milankovic has estimated the average annual income of a 'large' landholder at around 25 nomismata (or for a family of five: 125 N). A soldier earned about 6.5 N per year. According to the data assembled by Morrisson and Cheynet, "Prices and Wages", 840, between the eighth and tenth centuries the price of a horse could be around 12 nomismata. Thus buying just two horses (24 N) was about a fifth of a large land-holder's annual income ...

[2:] The *mediani* or middle ranks could afford a horse, a helmet and lance and held at least 40 *iugera* or 'yokings' of land (Rodriguez's figure). One 'yoking' or *jugerum* = two Roman acres, and 80 Roman acres (see Note 1 below) was 10 hectares. This was about the same as the average holding farmed by the better-off half of the peasantry in the Romaic East. Let us guess that the family income of a *medianus* was around 72 N (halfway between the average large landholder and the average smallholder). At 12 nomismata per animal, buying a horse for a soldier represented one-sixth of its annual income.

Finally there were [3:] the *minores*, the small-holders, who were expected to arm themselves with, or pay for, 'just' a bow and a quiver of arrows. (But composite bows embodied a lot of skilled labour, and so were quite expensive.) The average annual income for people in the small farmer class was 3.8 N pp, or 19 N for a family of five.

In the 11th century, however, the *strateia* became a mere tax, and this allowed more and more use to be made of so-called 'mercenary' troops, i.e. paid professionals, including Normans. Any deficiency would be supplied by the creation of a territorial military service enlisted from the local population, the so-called *kontaratoi* or *conterati*, from *kontarion*, 'lance or long spear': literally 'spear-carriers'.

In the 1040s especially, the light-armed urban militia of the *conterati* are widely recorded in urban politics, especially their behaviour at times of crisis and revolt. They were conscript militiamen; their spear was provided by the state.

Note 1: The Roman acre was the squared Roman 'arpent', 120 pedes by 120 pedes. This equals 14,400 square feet or about 0.126 hectares. One 'yoke' or *jugerum* = 0.2518 hectares, so 40 *iugera* = marginally more than 10 hectares.

In the Byzantine East, peasant holdings may have oscillated around four to five ha in the case of *boidatoi*, those who own just one ox, and 8-10 ha in the case of *zeugaratoi*, those owning a plough-team (Lefort in Laiou ed. 2002). Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army* p. 174, says that a single family with a pair of oxen could work a farm of 50-100 acres, ie 20+ hectares. He calls 144 acres or 58 hectares (720 Byzantine modii) a "good-sized" farm.

For comparison, in pre-modern Western Europe the average area worked by one *horse-team* was around 15-30 ha, but smaller with oxen. A holding over 100 ha was large, and one of 375 ha (925 acres) was a very large farm indeed. —Data in George Grantham, 'What's Space Got to Do with It? Distance and Agricultural Productivity before the Railway Age', McGill University, August, 2007: online at www.mcgill.ca/files/economics/whatspacegot.pdf.

A thought-experiment is possible using the figure of 40 jugera or 10 hectares. Present-day Puglia covers 19,366 sq km or 1,936,600 hectares. Let us guess that (a high estimate) 25% of the whole province was being cultivated in the 11th C, i.e. 484,150 ha. That represents 48,415 *mediani* holdings of average size (10 ha). And if each holding supported an average of five people then we have a provincial population of 242,075 people – which is plausible, albeit on the low side, noting that in their *Population Atlas*, McEvedy & Jones put the whole population of Italy at about five million in AD 1,000. But of course we are just guessing. As noted below, it is a highish figure using the density estimates of Stathakopoulos (2008).

Rodriguez reports that there were 28 bishoprics in non-Calabrian 'Longobardia', i.e. Puglia plus eastern Basilicata. If each ministered to at least 10,000 souls then we have 280,000+ people in the province.

We do not know how many of the holdings were *stratitika*. But let us guess that one in five was, i.e. the equivalent of 9,683 holdings. On this logic, Byzantine Puglia should have been easily able to afford the modest number of 5,000 farmer-soldiers or 2,500 full-time professionals ("mercenaries" so-called).

As a refinement, let us guess that the cultivated portion was divided 1/6, 2/6 and 3/6 between large (30 ha), medium (10 ha) and small holdings (5 ha). This yields 2,690 *large* holdings; 16,138 *medium* holdings; and 48,415 *small* holdings in Puglia, for a total of 67,243 farms: enough *in principle* for 13,449 soldiers if just one in five was a military holding. (If this result seems too large, remember that we guessed, rather generously, that fully 25% of the province was cultivated.)

As a further guess we imagine that large, medium and small farms supported respectively 16, 8 and four people. Implicit here is the assumption that *a modest number of landless labourers and an even smaller number of slaves* are all dependent on the larger estates. The raw figures are 43,040 + 129,104 + 193,660 people, for a provincial total population of 365,804. *This is perhaps more consistent with McEvedy & Jones' Italian estimate but on Stathakopoulos's estimate too high.*(*) And even if we try to be extra-conservative and halve 67,243 farms to 33,622 farms, one in five being a military holding (*stratitika*), still we get an **"in principle capability figure" of 6,724 men under arms** ... But the *strateia*, if money, must be collected, or if due in the shape of a human being, the soldier must turn up when he is

called out ...

(*) In the first pan-Italian census of 1861, Puglia had a population of 1,335,000; and Basilicata 509,000 [at <http://dawinci.istat.it/dawinci>]. The region was not yet mechanised in 1861, so we might expect medieval Puglia to have had *at least one-third its 19th C figure, or over 445,000 people*. But perhaps not. Stathakopoulos (2008) offers conservative figures for population density in the whole Byzantine millenium of nine people per km² in tough times, rising to 15 per km² in fair to good times. The area of modern Puglia is 19,366 km². Applying Stathakopoluos's figures, this yields 174,294 to 290,490 people. Or 35,000 to 58,000 farms if each farm represented five people.

Listed from north to south, the 28 dioceses of medieval Basilicata-Puglia were: Lesina, Civitate, Siponto, Lucera, Troina, Bovino, Ascoli, *Salpi* [today's Margherita di Savoia near Barletta], Melfi, Lavello, Canosa, Trani, Giovinazzo, Bitonto, *Bari*, Polignano, Monopoli, Conversano, Gravino, Acerenza, Tricarico, Tursi, Taranto, Oria, Brindisi, Lecce, Gallipoli and Otranto (source: Rodriquez).

Taking the higher figure of 290,000 that Stathakopolous's estimate yields, it will be seen that there may have been an average of about 10,000 people per diocese.

1038-40:

1. Italy: As noted, a new catepan Michael Spondyles [Italian: *Michele Sfrondilo*], lately doux of Antioch, arrived in *Bari* in 1038 to help lead the Sicilian expedition of *George Maniaces*. It is said that Spondyles set up (1038) press-gangs to conscript Latins (Lombards) as auxiliaries for the upcoming expedition to Sicily. In the Latin sources the conscript militiamen are called *conterati*, from the Gk *kontaratoi*, 'pikemen, spear-carriers'. See next: 2, below.

Spondyles probably replaced *Constantinos Opos* as catepan, with *Nikephoros Doukeianos* taking over from Spondyles the next year (Feb 1039). *Nikephoros* Dokeianos, killed in Jan 1040, was in turn succeeded, early 1040, by *Michael* Dokeianos.

The *Annales Barensis* record that "*Michael protospatarius et catepanus, qui et Dulkiano iunior*" (the protospatharius and catepan Michael, called Dokeianos the Younger) came "*a Sicilia in Lombardia*" (to Sicily in Longobardia). This suggests that Michael was the son of Nikephoros, whose death is recorded in the previous paragraph in the same source.

The Dokeianoι were related to the Comnenus family, Nikephorus's wife being a sister of the future emperor Isaac I Comnenus (Anna's *Alexiad* I:37, cited by Cawley, 'Foundation for Medieval Genealogy'; http://fmg.ac/projects/medlands/byzantine%20nobility.htm#_ftnref178; accessed 2008).

Catepans: 'Nicephorus, qui et *Dokino*' [Nikeforos Dokeianos], A.C. 1039. 'Michael, qui et *Dokiano* seu *Duchiano*' [Michael Dokeianos], 'A.C. 1041' (sic: correctly from autumn 1040).

2. Sicily: In spring-summer 1038 a large Romaic army, which included a small number of mercenary Lombard Italians and Normans, under the great general **George Maniakes**, aged 40, attempted to retake Muslim (ex-Kalbid) Sicily. As noted, he successfully recaptured a large part of eastern Sicily before being recalled in 1040 to Constantinople to answer charges.

Maniakes' army stormed Messina and defeated the Sicilian Saracens (Zirids and Kalbids), first at Rametta or Rometta, inland from Messina, near the island's NE corner, in 1038, then at inland *Dragina*, modern Troina (1040 or 1041).

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*: "Five [hundred](#) [Lombard and Norman] knights, or warriors on horseback, were enrolled by Arduin, the agent and interpreter of the [Greeks](#), under the standard of Maniaces, [governor](#) of [Byzantine] Lombardy. Before their landing, the [competing Muslim] [brothers](#) were [reconciled](#) [sic: this is an error: the peace talks failed]; the union of Sicily and Africa was restored; and the [island](#) was [guarded](#) to the water's edge. The Normans led the van [- unlikely: their role was that of auxiliaries, MO'R] and the [Arabs](#) of Messina felt the valour of an untried foe."

3. Italy: The Apulian capital, the fortress-town of Bari, rebelled against imperial rule in 1038, to be followed in 1040 by Ascoli and Mottola. A major cause of trouble was, as noted, the attempt by the Byzantines to conscript local men into a militia.

Argyros, son of Melus of Bari, taken captive back in 1018, was now, aged about 38, released and dispatched from Constantinople to help raise the Apulian levies, or rather: to put down the revolt of the *conterati* previously enlisted. His arrival in Italy (1039) was in relation to a precise military assignment of high profile: to re-establish order in Puglia where the *conterati* were in revolt against the empire (Italian Wikipedia, 2011, under 'Argyro').

Argyros, after 20 years captivity or exile in Constantinople, returned to Italy in 1038 or 1039. He served the empire (or emperor Michael IV at least) loyally for several years; it was not until the end of 1041, after Michael's death, that we see him leading the rebels. And after that brief defection he soon returned to being a loyal imperialist.

Bari was recaptured in 1040 and a new catepan, [Michael Dokeianos](#), arrived (late 1040) with Varangians amongst his army. (In the meantime - see next - the empire attacked Muslim Sicily.)

As Rodriguez relates, there was much tension in Apulia and revolts broke out in Bari in 1038 resulting in the death of several officials and 'Greek' residents. These civil uprisings had their origin in the levying of local men into a militia (Gk *kontaratoi*, Lat. *conterati*, 'spear-bearers') for the planned Sicilian campaign and an increase in taxes, probably to pay for the military operation.

A new catepan Nikephoros Dokeianos arrived at Bari in February of 1039 with the mission of subduing the empire's Italian subjects. The new governor brought express orders to end the tumult and he was at first successful, although within a few months the renewal of conscription produced new popular revolts and along with them the deaths of several imperial civil employees. *This occurred during a tour by Dokeianos to the northern zone of*

the Theme, made in order to recruit more light troops for the war being fought in Sicily. The prospective *kontaratoi* refused to be enlisted and revolted against the Romaic officials, killing several. First to die was the catepan himself, Nikephoros, at Ascoli in January 1040. Then on 5 May Michael Choirosphaktes or *Chirifactora*, sent as judge (*krites*) to the kastron of Mottola, was assassinated by rioting *kontaratoi*; along with another official, Romanos of Matera (PBW, citing the chronicles *Anonymous Barensis* 149 and *Lupus protospatharius* 58.10). Schlumberger, III Ch3, writes of the conterati "in mutiny" at the *kastron* (fort) of Mottola.

He adds: "*La rébellion dut prendre de suite une grande extension, car la ville même de Bari tomba un moment aux mains des révoltés, événement qui dut produire dans toute la région l'impression la plus funeste.*" – 'The rebellion had spread widely, because even the town of Bari fell for a brief period into the hands of the rebels, an event that was bound to produce across the whole region a most disastrous impression.'

Triangular Shields and Long Maces

Illustrations in Skylitzes depicting this campaign show the Byzantine troops carrying *triangular, tear-drop or "kite"-shaped shields*, while the Muslims have smaller *round shields*. In the illustration of the battle at Troina, the Byzantines' long maces are much in evidence.

In the 9th C the *bardoukion* was a fighting mace, which could be also thrown. The same can be said for the *matzoukion*, which presented a strong similarity. Bardoukia and matzoukia were maces *thrown* against the enemy by both infantrymen and cavalrymen, at certain distances. Emperor Leo speaks of the cavalry mace, saying that it should have a spiked head. The head featured spiked projections designed to inflict serious wounds. D'Amato, citing Kolias, says that the shaft, normally of wood, had a length between 60 and 80 cm (Raffaele D'Amato, 'The Mace', cm. <http://www.worldmuseumofman.org/byzantinemaces1.htm>; accessed 2008.)

Maniakes' own dress and equipment, as illustrated in Skylitzes' text, has been analysed at length by D'Amato. We have reviewed his conclusions in the Appendix to this paper. —Source: Raffaele D'Amato, *A Prôtospatharios, Magistros, and Strategos Autokrator of the 11th cent.*, a monograph on Maniakes and his army in 1038-43, at www.porphyra.it/supplemento4.pdf; accessed 2007 and 2011.

The Sicilian Expedition, 1038-40

Maniakes led a composite army whose exact size is unknown, although it was evidently reasonably large: at a guess, **over 10,000 men** (the sources, which are less than precise, are carefully cited in D'Amato's monograph on Maniakes, *A Prôtospatharios, Magistros, and Strategos Autokrator of 11th cent.*, page 3, at www.porphyra.it/supplemento4.pdf. accessed 2011).

There were [1:] perhaps 5,000 Easterners from Asia Minor: detachments from the Opsikion, Thrakesion and Anatolikòn themes; [2:] perhaps 2,000 or more *italioi stratiotai*, or the local Byzantine troops of Italy, made up of

Lombard conscripts and 'Italo-Greek' regulars or semi-professionals in the form of thematic* troops from Byzantine Calabria and the Catepanate (Apulia); [3:] a large detachment (say 1,000) of the best foot regiment, the Varangian Guard, composed of Russians and Scandinavians, led by the legendary Norwegian prince Harald "Hardrada" Sigurdsson, aged 23 in 1038; and [4:] 500 Armenian infantrymen. A further force of [5:] Lombard and Norman mercenary horse-soldiers numbered 300-500 – 300 probably being the correct figure** – led by the Lombard Ardouin and the Norman brothers Drogo and William "Iron-arm" de Hauteville – although William had not yet acquired this nickname. These men were assigned to Maniakes by the Lombard prince Guaimarius V of Salerno, a vassal of the Empire.

In addition there were [6:] 'Greek' cavalrymen to the number of 300 under the command of Katakalon Kekaumenos, including Paulician (Thracian thematic*) troops; [7:] an unknown number of Macedonians; and [8:] some semi-professional northern Italian (Lombard) cavalrymen.

(*) 'Themes' means the military provinces of the empire. Thematic troops were trained, semi-professional cavalry and infantry who engaged in farming when not called out for battle.

(**) Kedrenos speaks of 500 "Franks called from Gallia Transalpina", but 300 is the number given by Leo Marsicanus Amato (Dunbar & Loud p.66). Perhaps 300 Normans and 200 Lombards?

(**) The Paulicians were a sect of dualist "heretics" living in large numbers in Thrace, especially around Philippopolis (modern Plovdiv). They are often referred to as 'Manicheans', although Manicheism is a somewhat different doctrine. Another dualist sect was the Bogomils of western Bulgaria (Macedonia and westwards) whose doctrines differed somewhat from the Paulicians'; also they lacked the military ethos of the Paulicians. Bogomilism spread eastwards into the empire proper during the late 11th C., finding converts even among the Byzantine aristocracy.

The pro-Norman Italian sources attribute the expedition's victories largely to the Norman contingent, but we must strongly doubt this, if only because they were so few (possibly 300). One might allow that the average Norman horseman was a little superior to the average Romaic cavalryman (none of the imperial Tagmata seem to have been dispatched*), while plainly the Varangians were the best of the infantry. Norwich rightly observes that *the decisive factor was Maniakes' skill as a general* ("Normans" p.54).

(*) Besides the *italioi stratiotai*, Maniakes' troops in 1038 probably included soldiers from Macedonia and the Eastern Themes, because a few years later – in Cedrenus and the *Annales Baresnes* under 1041 – we have mention of troops in Southern Italy from the Themes of the Opsikion, Thrakesion ("the *meros*** of the Thracians") and Anatolikon. Skylitzes under 1041 also mentions troops of the >>tagmata of the *Phoideratoi* [Federates] [?and?] of Lycaonia and Pisidia<< or >>"the Pisidians and Lycaonians *who make up the unit of the Foederati*<<

(Skylitzes, trans. Wortley p.401). This almost certainly meant ordinary thematic troops from the Anatolikon theme of central Asia Minor, and not (as D'Amato proposes) troops from one of the elite imperial Tagmata of Constantinople.

(**) A *meros* was another term for a *turma*, or the troops of a sub-division of a Theme. A *meros* could be as large as 3,000 men or as small as 800. In the 10th century the Thracian theme had had four *meroi*, with an average of 2,500 men each (Treadgold, *Army* pp.97, 101).

The *Annales Baresenses* says that, after the defeat of Montemaggiore (see below), among the troops called from Sicily against the rebel Normans were "*miseri Macedones*" ['poor' or second-class Macedonians]. They would be Thematic troops, to be distinguished, D'Amato believes, from the élite regiment of the Phoidheratoi. In truth, the 'tagmata of the *Phoidheratoi* of [? and of?] Lycaonia and Pisidia' was a thematic corps. The reference is to the *turma* (district and regiment) of the Federates or Phoidheratoi, which was the senior turma of the three turmai *within the theme of the Anatolics* (1: the turma of the Federates, 2: turma of Lycaonia and 3: turma of Sozopolis or Pisidia) (Treadgold, *Army* p.99). In this context, then, "tagmata" means simply 'battalions' or 'regiments' or 'units'; it is *not* a reference to the elite guards regiments of Constantinople.

In the 9th century the Anatolic Federates numbered 5,000 and the troops of Italy amounted to 2,000: whether they had the same numbers in 1038-41 we do not know.

Skylitzes and the *Annales Baresenses* both mention *Paulikani et Calabrenses*, i.e. Paulicians from Thrace and Calabrians. The Paulicians are called the "manichean Tagma" in several sources.

Chronology

1038: Maniakes crosses from Calabria to Messina; battle of Rametta west of Messina: *summer 1038*. As noted, the landing at Messina is the subject of an illustration in Skylitzes.

1039-40: down the coast to Syracuse by spring 1040. – A surprisingly *slow* campaign.

mid 1040: expedition into the interior: battle of Troina/Traina (NE of Enna).

Late 1040: M. is recalled ...

1041: Muslims recover E Sicily. *10 May*: Kekaumenos successfully defends Messina.

George Maniakes led a powerful East Roman invasion of eastern Sicily (which after his departure fails by 1042). As we have said, the axe-armed infantry Varangians, possibly 500 men under 'Araltes' or Harald, formed the elite division in his army.

The forces of the Norman leader Rainulf Drengot, including the Hauteville

family – the brothers of the future duke Robert Guiscard – went to Sicily in 1038 under the flag of the Byzantine general, George Maniakes. Whilst on campaign for the Byzantines, they met another famous figure, the Norwegian prince Harald *Hardrada*, a nickname perhaps best translated as 'ruthless'. In Greek: *Araltes*. Harold had fled from Norway after being wounded at the battle of Stikstad, and had taken refuge in Novgorod and then finally he ended up in Constantinople. Within a short time of his arrival in Constantinople he was appointed commander of the Varangian Guard.

A north-Italian 'Lombard' from Milan, Arduin, led the Lombard (Romance-speaking) troops committed by Guaimar IV of Salerno to Maniakes' Sicilian expedition in 1038. According to Amatus of Montecassino, in 1040 he refused to surrender a captured horse to the Byzantine general, and Maniakes consequently had him stripped and beaten. Whatever happened, Arduin and his Salernitan contingent along with the Normans (also sent by Guaimar) and the Varangians (sent by Emperor Constantine IX) left Sicily and returned (1040) to the mainland.

The Normans assisted the Byzantine general, Maniakes, in his Sicilian undertaking, but, indignant at being (as they saw it) defrauded of their reward, soon after turned their arms against the Byzantines. Their subsequent conquests would lay the foundation of what came to be the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, or the Kingdom of Naples. After their victory near Cannae in 1041: see there, the Normans will become masters of Calabria and Apulia (Puglia), with the exception of the seaboard towns; their capital will be established at Melfi, and the 12 counts divided the territory among themselves.

2. fl. Cecaumenus or Kekavmenos, army commander and afterwards, in the 1070s, the author of an important ***Strategikon*** or military manual for generals. He mentions the Varangian Harold.

Quote: "Strive at all time to have the fleet in top condition and to have it not want for anything. For ***the fleet is the glory of Romania***. Strive also to keep the commanders of the fleet above every bribe and form of unjust gain" (- Kekaumenos, *Strategikon*:

www.acad.carleton.edu/curricular/mars/kekaumenos.pdf; accessed Feb 2005).

"You should have *archers* (marines) in your large ships, the *drugarios* and *protonotarios* [commanders and finance-logistics officers] of the fleet should be religious, energetic, capable, wise men who fear God and your majesty, and address and investigate with rigour the slightest thing which is done to the fleet. For *when the fleet is reduced to nothingness, you shall be overthrown and fall*" (ibid.). This was perhaps prescient: after the fleet was wound down in the late 1100s, the Latins (Venetians and French) were able, in 1204, to capture Constantinople itself

Seclusion of Women

A woman living in the age of Byzantium, at least those in the upper class, spent the greater part of her life in her home. We read this, for instance, in

Kekavmenos' (fl. 1060) "Strategikon": "*Keep your daughters as prisoners, confined and inconspicuous*". A woman was invariably accompanied whenever she left her house to go – the sole activities of a woman outside her own home that were socially acceptable – to church, attend a festivity, *visit the baths*, or call on her relations.

In the home, said Kekaumenos, women should be kept apart from male visitors. They should go outdoors only with *heads covered* by a shawl or 'veil', i.e. the *maphorion*: a covering for the head and shoulders, *not* the face*, and accompanied by other women, servants or family members (Rautman, *Daily Life* pp.26, 45). This prescriptivism may imply that middle class and lower class women frequently went around bareheaded.*

In the 12th century Skylitzes chronicle, the picture of the rich widow Danielis, the famous 8th C patroness of Basil I, shows her face unveiled, the *maphorion* covering just her head and shoulders.

(*) There is a careful discussion of this vexed issue in a 2006 paper by Timothy Dawson. Noting that "veil" is an ambiguous term in English (and French), he allows that women commonly or usually wore head-coverings – headscarves and turbans – over their *hair*, but argues that veiling of the *face* was *not* the dominant mode for *urban* women of average religious observance. Key statements in Psellus and Anna Comnena that may give this impression have probably been misread. —Tim Dawson, 'Women's 's Dress in Byzantium', in Lynda Garland ed, *Byzantine Women: varieties of Experience 800-1200*, London: Ashgate 2006.

Local Conscripts and Volunteers in Byzantine Italy

The largest part of the population in Romaic Italy were 'Lombards', i.e. non-Greeks speaking proto-Italian; but a minority were native Greek speakers.

The *conterati* – lit. 'spear-carriers', light infantry conscripts – participated in the first phase of the Sicilian expedition of George Maniaces. After their return home at the end of 1039, they rebelled against the catepan Nicephoros Dokeianos and at Mottola they killed an imperial official. The following year the Byzantines retaliated heavily against the demobilized militia: Argyrus captured (1040) two of their leaders, Musandus and John of Ostuni – Ostuni being a village near Brindisi, – and imprisoned them in Bari; another four rebels were hanged in the same city; and another in Ascoli.

William of Apulia attests that the Greek regular troops at the battle of Montepeloso (1041: see there) were bolstered by many local auxiliaries: "*indigenae Danaïs descendunt auxilarii*" or '(by) indigenous Greeks coming down [from the hills] to help them'. The rest of the local population, whether Longobard or Latin, was split in two: some went over to the side of the Normans while others remained faithful to the Byzantines. This is clear from the testimony of the *Vatican Anonymous* text: "*qui adjunctis sibi Longobardis illis, qui nondum Normannorum consenserant*" – 'who themselves were attached to/supported those Lombards, [and those] who had not yet favoured the Normans' (Italian edition of the Wikipedia, 2011, under 'conterati').

1039-40:

1. Sicily: As noted, Maniaces' army proceeds down the coast to Syracuse by spring 1040.

2. Apulia: The Byzantine catepan Nicephorus 'Ducliano', Gk: Nikephoros *Doukeianos*, arrives at Bari (February 1039); he chases (late 1039) the rebel *conterati* militia to Ascoli, where he is killed, but the town passes again into Romaic hands.

As noted earlier, the conscription of Apulian Lombards by Greek press-gangs to reinforce the Sicilian expedition, and the increased taxation to help finance it, prompted several outbreaks in the Apulian towns beginning in 1038. Further levies were attempted in late 1039 but this was resisted. Meanwhile other men already conscripted rebelled in Sicily and returned to Apulia. When the catepan Nicephorus Doceianus made a tour into north Apulia in January 1040, the rebellious *conterati* killed him.

Seeing an opportunity, the resentful ex-captive Argyrus gives the signal and the revolt becomes widespread (beginning of 1040; or in 1041 according to some). The Lombards quickly overcome many Greek garrisons in Apulia. The insurgents elect Prince Atenulf of Benevento as their nominal leader.

Year 1040 – 9 or 11 January – Niceforo Ducliano, Gk: Nikephoros Dokeanos, is killed in Ascoli, and the town passes back to the Normans.

1040 – November: The new Byzantine catepan *Michael* Doceanos [Dokeianos], a relative – probably son – of the dead Nicephoros, attacks Ascoli and hangs a leading ally of the rebel Normans.

The Italian town of Bari had rebelled against Imperial rule in 1038, to be followed in 1040 by Mottola. Bari was recaptured the same year, and a new *katepanos*, Michael Dokeianos, arrived (late 1040) with further Varangians amongst his army. Saga references can perhaps be read as saying that Harald was among them – there are references to his fighting against Longobardi (Lombards) and 'Franks' (Normans); but it is much more likely he was still with Maniaces in Sicily.

The catepan Michael offers (1040 or 1041) the rule of Melfi to the Greek-speaking Lombard Arduin with the title topoterites or second in charge, i.e. deputy Catepan. However, Arduin soon betrayed him and led his Norman mercenaries in support of the Apulian rebels. See 1041.

Lupus: "*Anno 1040. praedictus Dulchianus [Dokeianos] excussit Contractos [sic: kontaratoi or conterati] de Apulia, et praedicti Contracti occiderunt Chirifactora Crithiri [sic: Gk krites?] Imperatorem subtus Mutulam, et Romanum Materiensem mense Maii eoq.; mense obsedit Argyrus filius Meli Barum civitatem et percussit Musandrum et ligavit eum vinculo et introivit cum eo Barum, et Contracti dispersi sunt.*" – 'The previously mentioned Dokeianos has cast out the *conterati* [i.e. discharged local light troops or militia] from Apulia and the aforementioned *conterati* kill the commander Chirifactora [Michael Choïrosphaktes] the *krites* ['official, judge'] beneath (the walls of) Mottola and also Romanus from Matera: in May he too is killed. Argyrus* the son of Meles for a month besieges the town of Bari, and strikes at Musandrus [the *conterati* leader], binds him in chains, enters Bari with him, and the *conterati* are dispersed.'

(*) Argyrus at this time was still in Byzantine service. Musandros was a leader of the rebel *conterati* or conscript militia.

c.1040:

Greece: The Monastery of 'Osios / Hosias Loukas / Hosios Lukas at Stiris/Stiri, west of Thebes/*Thiva*, on the N side of the Gulf of Corinth, was built in a very characteristic Byzantine Greek-cross-octagon style. The surviving mosaics are first class: "a more severe and abstracted style" than at Dafni (see 1080). The *katholikon* or main chapel was built in c.1020; the *theotokos* c.1040. - Good photographs in Lassus 1967 and Time-Life 1989.

A fresco (below) of an oddly beardless Joshua in Hosias Loukas offers an excellent picture of **the equipment of a Romaic soldier**: a small cap-style iron or steel helmet with a (- probably) leather but possibly linen *aventail* (neck and ear protector); *sleeveless lamellar corselet to the waist worn over a mail shirt* that extends to the wrists; upper arm protectors evidently of leather, extending to the elbow; all-around skirt of metal-studded leather strips (*pteruges*) protecting the thighs; and nearly knee-high boots. His medium-length sword hangs from a *baldric* running from his right shoulder; and a cloak running over his left shoulder is fastened in front by a knot. A long thin pike or lance held in his left hand rests back on his left shoulder.

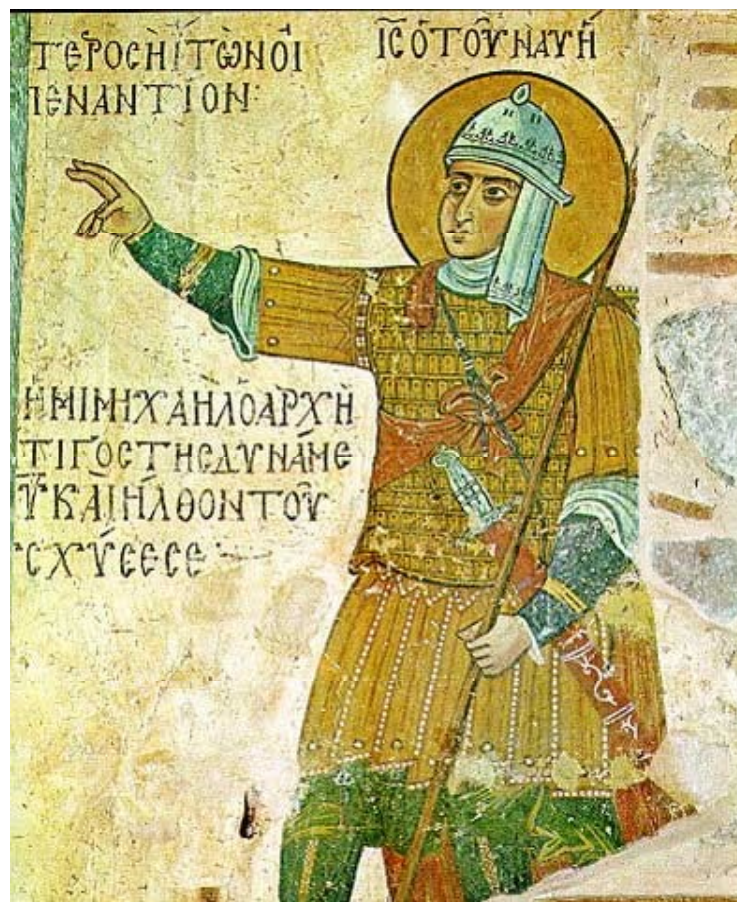


Illustration:

GO HERE for Tim Dawson's latter-day reconstruction of lamellar armour:
http://www.levantia.com.au/military/h_infantry.html.

2. Epirus: Approximate date of the outstanding Byzantine frescoes of St Sophia in Ochrid, the seat of the Rhomaic archdiocese set up after Basil's conquest of Western Bulgaria. Probably executed by Byzantine craftsmen from Thessalonica.

1040:

Sicily: Maniaces' army advances south to Syracuse and besieges it. Seeing their position as hopeless, the Saracen garrison of Syracuse capitulated (Norwich, *Normans* p.54). This was 162 years since the city had been lost to the Muslims (in 878).

Oumer [Omar, i.e. Abdallah] of Africa, who had previously been bested by Georgios Maniakes, returned to Sicily with a much larger army than before. But Maniakes again defeated him (1040) and this time slew, according to Skylitzes, "more than 50,000" of his troops (sic: 5,000 would be more credible).

Stephanos, Michael VI's uncle and Michael (V)'s father, failed to prevent Oumer's escape from Sicily, and the general Georgios Maniakes berated him for his cowardice and incompetence. (This is illustrated in the 12th C Skylitzes manuscript.) Stephanos immediately wrote to his nephew Ioannes (John) the Orphanotrophos, the emperor's elder brother, and accused Maniakes of planning treachery against the state. The latter was arrested and taken (late 1040) in chains to Constantinople along with the Armenian general Basil Theodorokanos.

Imperial rule in Sicily then devolved upon Stephanos, and *all the towns that Maniakes had won back for the empire, save Messina, were again lost* (by early 1041) *to the Saracens*. On a positive note for the empire, Katakalon Kekaumenos succeeded in defending Messina, winning a crushing victory: *10 May 1041 (PBW, narrative for 1040)*.

Battle of Troina

A Saracen relief force under Abdullah [Abdallah b. al-Muizz] came eastwards to try to relieve Syracuse; Maniakes decided to strike inland to confront Abdullah before he reached the coast. The Arabs are defeated near Troina, which is located west of Mt Etna, NE of Enna.

Leaving some troops to continue the siege, Maniakes makes an expedition into the interior: victory at Troina or Traina (medieval *Draginai*). The river Simeto runs from near Troina down to the east coast below Catania; no doubt Maniakes' army would have proceeded up the valley.

Troina is known as the highest town in Sicily. According to the Italian Wikipedia ('Troina', 2009), the battle was fought to the NE of Troina near the village of Cerami. The major road in the region today runs broadly SE past Cerami through rugged country to Troina.

The Arab battle line was demolished by the first charge of the Byzantine (and Norman) cavalrymen, suggesting they were heavily armoured. Their

horses wore metal horseshoes or "plates" which protected them against the caltrops (iron spikes) with which the Arabs had surrounded their camp. "This most foolish man was not aware that the Byzantine mounts had their feet completely bound with certain wide and most sturdy plates" (Nilus). —John F. Haldon, *Warfare, state and society in the Byzantine world, 565-1204*, Routledge 1999 p.223; the key primary source is Nilus, *Vita S. Philareti*.

The Norman William de Hauteville, aged about 35, won his nickname *Iron Arm*, according to some, at Troina (the Norman chronicler Malaterra says earlier at Syracuse) while fighting for the 'Greeks', by single-handedly killing the emir of Syracuse in battle.

At Troina, when in sight of the enemy Maniakes arranged his troops according to the customary formation in three lines or divisions (*tres acies*) that would be able to enter combat successively. This was best practice as specified by the military manuals (Haldon 1999: 350). See below for an outline of Byzantine tactical formations

In the hand-to-hand combat the Byzantines were helped by the arrival of a strong storm that raised great dust-clouds which blinded the Arabs. Disorganised, the rows of the army of Abdallah were incapable of resisting the first charge by heavy cavalry. Soon the battle became a massacre with the Muslim soldiers dying in their thousands, and here again the Normans found occasion to excel in the fighting (or so the Latin sources say) (thus Rodriquez). According to Skylitzes, 405.80-406.90, "50,000" Muslims died, surely a great exaggeration (PBW, Narrative for 1040).

The sources describe both Romaic and Norman heavy cavalry charging in order and riding down the enemy lines at Troina (Haldon 2001: 112); but it is by no means certain that this was an early instance of charging with *couched* lances. Indeed, the Skylitzes illustrations, showing the use of long heavy maces, would suggest that the older style of *poking* with the lance was still preferred. (Compare the battle of Hastings in 1066: the Bayeux Tapestry shows most lancers wielding their lances in non-couched ways.) The Byzantine would have used, successively, the bow, the lance, the mace and the sword. Maces were not just for hand-to-hand combat but could be thrown as necessary.

There is a tradition that possibly originates in 1040 after the Battle of Troina/Cerami according to which some of the Saracens were pursued to the NE after the battle near Cerami. At any rate, so much blood flowed that a nearby river - from then on called precisely Saracena: an upper tributary of the Simeto River NE of Troina - was coloured red.

The tradition says that to thank the Madonna for the victory [almost blasphemy for us, but medieval times were different!], Maniakes ordered the building of a little monastery to which he donated an icon - so the bloody legend goes - that had been painted by Saint Lucy (Lucia) herself, famously martyred at Syracuse in Antiquity, and the patron saint of that city. The little monastery became Santa Maria di Maniace, and gave its name to the village of Maniace, just NW of the River Saracena: immediately south of the vast

Nebrodi national park.

The story is first recorded in Edrisi's geography of AD 1150; he writes of *Manyag* [i.e. Maniace] or *Giran to-Daqiq* or *Ghiran* and *Dequq*, that is "Flour Grotto" or "Cave of Flour" [Arabic *ghiran* 'small caves' and *daqiq*, 'flour']. According to other sources, however, Maniakes would have founded a village directly, to garrison the routes in that direction, i.e those that ran from the coast inland via the northern side of Mt Etna (Italian Wikipedia, 2009, under 'Castello di Nelson').

Battle Formation

To illustrate a typical battlefield deployment used by the Byzantines, we can cite the formation adopted by Emperor John I for a battle fought near the lower Danube River in 971.

He drew up his army in two lines. The front line comprised most of the infantry (perhaps 2,500 men) in the centre with cavalry on either flank (say 1,625 left and 1,625 right). The Varangians commonly formed the centre of the front line. Then there was a second line made up of a smaller body of infantry archers and slingers (say 1,250), with two further cavalry regiments (500 left and 500 right), hidden from view, placed behind the ordinary cavalry in front. The second infantry line could fire over the heads of the first line, while the hidden reserve cavalry units could be sent against the enemy's flanks in a surprise move. (The numbers in brackets are not from 971; rather they are the sorts of numbers to be expected in an expeditionary force serving in Italy.)

As we have said, Maniakes formed up his army in three lines at the Battle of Troina in Sicily in 1040. Unfortunately we do not know where the various unit-types were placed.

If we follow the 10th C Byzantine military manuals (see McGeer 1995), we might expect an expeditionary army of 10,000 to be made up as follows, at least for fighting in the East. It is not known if all of these troop-types were also used in the same proportions in Italy.

1,800 ordinary cavalry

These were lancers wearing plain, one-piece low-conical iron helmets. Their body armour was a waist-length *lorikion* or mail corselet and/or a *klivanion* or *klibanion*, the iron lamellar corselet or 'torso cuirass' with platelets rivetted to a shaped shirt of hardened leather. Over this they wore an *epilorikon* or thick padded surcoat of cotton or coarse silk.

The lances or light pikes, Greek: *kontos*, were used for poking, stabbing and thrusting, not for the couched charge as in later Western—and Byzantine—armies of the 12th century. The couched charge did not come into use until the period 1100-1150 (see France 1994: 71).

Their secondary weapon was a slashing sword. D'Amato and also Dawson, 2007b: 19, give the length of the *spathion* or Romano-Greek long sword as about 85 cm [2 ft 10 in]; McGeer offers 90 cm [three feet].

They carried 'kite-shaped' shields: almond-shaped or like an inverted tear-drop, about two feet or 60 cm wide at their widest, or 70 cm. Such shields

were about 105 cm or 3 feet 5 inches high according to D'Amato.

1,200 mounted archers: 40% of the cavalry (McGeer 1995: 68, 213)

The smaller cavalry bow (a 'Hunnic' recurve composite bow) could shoot arrows as far as 130 metres, with a killing range of perhaps 80 metres or 260 feet. The archers carried on their belt a single large rounded-box quiver with 40-50 arrows. The arrows were inserted point upwards (in contrast to the infantry quiver).

As Dawson notes, Phokas's (AD 975) *Praecepta Militaria* [PM] or 'Composition on Warfare' at III.8 says that the horse-archers should wear helmets, body-armour in the form of lamellar *klibania* and quilted coats called *kavadia* which protect their legs and part of their horses. See the photograph of Dawson's reconstruction at his Levantia website ("Archer"). There the soldier wears high boots folded down, a split *kavadion* or thick padded coat to just below the knees worn under a lamellar cuirass (torso only), and a rounded skull-tight dish-style helmet with a non-metallic aventail.

Phokas does not mention shields being carried by horse-archers. Rather they should wear *klibania* and helmets "only" (McGeer p.37). This may reflect a longstanding view among the Byzantines that shields were an obstruction for light cavalry, hindering their shooting flexibility (Dawson, *Cavalryman* p.33). Moreover when brigaded with lancers the archers were typically placed in the middle (inside) ranks.

Up to 250 "true" cataphracts

In the 960s AD Emperor Nicephorus Phokas introduced a new-style super-heavy cavalry regiment with fully armoured horses (McGeer p.217). It is not known if any were ever stationed in Italy. One would guess *not*.

The horse-armour was a full *klibadion* made of hardened ox-hide platelets covering the whole horse to its knees. Their main weapon was the large mace, Greek *bardoukion*, 'sledge-hammer', used for smashing through the centre of the enemy line; but they also carried lance and sword.

150-250 light horse skirmishers (Mc Geer p.211).

Dawson, citing PM II.3, explains that the *prokoursatores* were a medium-cavalry type whose job was to harass small groups of the enemy and pursue fugitives. They could be equipped in a simple *klibanion* like the horse-archer, or they could wear mail. Their standard armament was a sword, mace and round shield. We might call them 'sword-chasers', as they lacked the lance.

Sub-total: say 3,000 cavalrymen (six *parataxes* of 500).

In emperor Leo's *Taktika*, ca. 907 AD, the thematic cavalry are formed up five deep: the first two ranks were lancers, then two ranks of archers (40%) and finally another rank of lancers (one *bandon* = six *allaghiai* = six x 10 files of five men = 300).

In the later 10th Century the basic cavalry unit was the new-style *bandon* of just 50 men, who formed up five ranks deep. In battle formation 10 *banda*

formed one formation or regiment (*parataxis*): this created a 100-horse front ($500 = 100 \times 5$). As before, lancers were placed in the first two and also the back rows; horse-archers made up the 3rd and 4th rows, i.e. 40% were bowmen (McGeer p.284; also Toynbee 1973: 313).

3,000-5,000 basic pike infantry ("kontaratoi")

According to the Byzantine military manuals, the common infantryman wore quilt body-armour and a turban-like 'pseudo-helmet' of felt (McGeer pp.203-4; illustrations by McBride in Dawson 2007b). Heath (1979) notes that, although the manuals do not state that ordinary infantry wear iron helmets, the contemporary illustrations do show infantry typically with iron helmets and also lamellar iron or mail body armour - often to the waist but sometimes to the knees. Conceivably such illustrations represent elite infantry guardsmen in the capital rather than the ordinary foot-soldiers of the Themes.

Their round shields were sometimes quite large: up 140 cm (4 ft 7 in) high, according to McGeer p.205, i.e. covering from above the shoulder to below the knee. Dawson 2007b: 23 offers the smaller figure of 95 cm (3 ft) as normal. Parani, *Images* p. 125 list the "great round" infantry shield as having a diameter of 82 cm [2 ft 8 in].

Their primary weapon was a very long spear or thin pike of about four metres or 13 feet, Greek *kontarion*, also called *doru* or 'spear' in Leo the Deacon. McGeer translates *kontarion* as "spear". They also carried a "belt-hung" sword (*spathion*), i.e. not hung on a baldric from the shoulder as was common for cavalry (McGeer 1995: 206). Also Dawson's *Levantia* website under 'Infantry'.

2,400 foot archers

About a quarter of the infantry force. No armour. They used heavier bows capable of sending an arrow over 300 metres, with a killing distance of perhaps 150-200 metres (McGeer pp.68, 207, 272).

Nikephoros Phokas specifies that his archers are to have a small shield, two bows and two quivers: one of 60 arrows, the other of 40 arrows. As we noted earlier, foot archers stored their arrows point-down in their quivers that were hung on shoulder straps (baldrics).

1,200 light infantry

Armed with javelins or slings. The sling is more accurate and has a greater range than a bow-fired arrow: lead pellets and stones weighing 50 grams will travel up to 400 metres.

Javeliners carried two or three casting spears (*akontia*, 'javelins' or *doration*, 'throwing spear') up to "2.75" m or nine ft long. The *Syllogé Taktikôn* of the 10th century says that infantry javelins must be no longer than 2.35 m or 7ft 9in, which is surprisingly long; they must have been quite light in their shaft and heads (Dawson 2007b: 24). We have no information on the range of javelins but 40 metres (half the capability of today's top 10 Olympic javeliners) can be noted for discussion.

Light infantry shields were smaller than those of the pike infantry (McGeer 1995: 208). According to Parani, p.126, they were "oblong" (possibly oval) and 94 cm high [3 ft 1 in].

600 heavy infantry pikemen called menavlatoi or menavliatoi

In the East this type defended the infantry square against cavalry charges (McGeer pp.209, 268). They were armed with very thick pikes or heavy poles, used to stab the enemy horses. The pikes were possibly three to four metres or 10-12 ft in length with a long 20-inch or 50 cm blade (McGeer's figures; Dawson 2007b: 61 says just 2.5 metres long, so 'heavy spear' might be the best rendering).

The infantry square was symmetrical and seven deep, with spearmen in the front ranks, foot-archers behind them and the *menavliatoi* at the rear (Dawson 2007b: 52, 62).

Subtotal 6-8,000 infantry in six to eight taxiarchies or battalions of 1,000 (McGeer p.51; also p.207).

The standard or default deployment of an infantry taxiarchy was in a rectangular formation seven men deep: two ranks of *kontaratoi* at the front, then three rows of foot-archers and two further rows of *kontaratoi* at the back (7 x 142 = 994). The archers shot over the heads of the front rows (see details in McGeer pp.265-67 etc).

2. Apulia: Nikephoros Dokeianos, catepan or *katepano* of Italy, is killed at Ascoli.

(From PBW): Nikephoros Dokeianos, catepan of Italy, had driven the rebellious *conterati*, the discharged local light troops, out of Apulia. However he was killed in the town of Ascoli. And the rebel *conterati* killed Michael Choirosphaktes & Romanos (of Matera?) near Mottola. The *conterati*, after being driven from Apulia, on 5 May killed Michael Choirosphaktes *krites* (the judge) and Romanos (of Matera?) near Mottola (Lupus protospatharius 58.10-11).

Argyros son of Melus, leading imperial troops, wounded and captured the chief *conteratus* or rebel militia leader Musandus, besieging & entering Bari with him & Ioannes (John) of *Ostouni* [Ostuni: a small town near Brindisi]. Argyros fought the *conterati* outside Bari and his troops wounded Musandus their leader. Later he besieged and entered the town, imprisoning Musandus and Ioannes (John) of Ostouni. The *conterati* were "scattered" (May 1040; Annales Barenses 54.19; Lupus protospatharius 58.12).

Now *Michael* Dokeianos came from Sicily to Italy as the new catepan, meting out punishments. Michael Dokeianos was sent from Sicily to succeed [his relation?] Nikephoros Dokeianos as *katepano* in Italy. He reached Bari in November, and had four men hanged: one at Ascoli and three at Bitonto, where he also blinded four others.

Scumberger, III ch3,: "*Marchant en hâte vers le nord, malgré les rigueurs de la saison, le catépan réussit d'abord à reprendre Ascoli, l'antique Ausculum, à quelques lieues à l'ouest de Foggia, dans la vallée de l'Ofanto.*"

C'est dans cette ville, semble-t-il, qu'avait eu lieu la jonction des « conterati » révoltés d'Apulie avec leurs nouveaux auxiliaires. De là le catépan marcha sur Bitonto qu'il reprit également. Dans ces deux villes, de cruelles exécutions jetèrent la terreur au coeur des rebelles. Le catépan y fit pendre sur la muraille quatre citoyens importants. Puis, Michel Dokeianos n'osant se mesurer immédiatement en bataille rangée avec les Normands, probablement parce qu'il attendait des renforts qui devaient lui parvenir de Constantinople, alla prendre ses quartiers d'hiver dans sa capitale de Bari. – 'Marching in haste towards the north, in spite of the rigours of the season, the catepan initially succeeded in retaking Ascoli, the ancient Ausculum, a few miles west of Foggia, in the valley of the Ofanto. It was in this town, it seems, that "conterati" rebels of Apulia had joined up with their new auxiliaries. From there the catepan went on Bitonto which he also re-took. In these two towns, cruel executions put terror in the hearts of the rebels. The catepan made hanged four important citizens and placed them on the walls. Then, Michael Dokeianos not immediately willing to meet the Norman in pitched battle, probably because he was awaiting reinforcements from Constantinople, went into winter quarters in his capital of Bari'.

As we noted earlier, Michael Dokeianos refused to pay the 'Franks' (Norman mercenaries) their monthly salaries, and when their leader Arduin went to see him, asking for his soldiers to be treated fairly and the situation to be remedied, he insulted him and had him flogged. This provoked his men to revolt. The historians Skylitzes and Attaleiates, who follow a pro-Maniakes line, ascribe this behaviour to Michael Dokeianos, but Italian sources are divided, some claiming that Maniakes himself was largely responsible (PBW).

3. Rebellion in the west Balkans: Peter Delyan, having been crowned in Belgrade, leads the Bulgarian rebels from Belgrade to Scopje and Dyrrhachium.

In 1040, in the Bulgarian town of Belgrade (the present capital of Serbia), Petar Delyan was appointed tsar "after he had been lifted on a shield by the army". He was met there by representatives of the insurgents who had come from distant Bulgaria. His uncle, King Stephen, was probably also involved in obtaining the title of tsar for Delyan.

Peter took Nish and Skopje, and then marched to Thessaloniki, where the Byzantine Emperor Michael IV was staying. Michael fled, leaving his treasury to a Michael Ivec. The latter, who was probably a son of Ivec, a general of Samuil's, promptly turned over the bulk of the treasury to Peter outside the city. Thessaloniki remained in Byzantine hands, but Macedonia and parts of Greece were taken by Peter's forces. This inspired revolts in Epirus and Albania against Byzantine rule as well.

Emperor Michael retreated to Constantinople, and Delyan raided into Greece. He was aided by his cousin Alusian, a Bulgarian general in Romaic service who defected to his cousin's side. Together they took 14,000 men to besiege Thessalonica. When this failed, Alusian killed Peter and took over his revolt. See 1041.

The emperor sent an expedition, under the command of the eunuch general George Probatas, to Serbia against Stephanus Vojislav. An inexperienced leader, George Probatas lost his entire army (Cedr. II 527).

Chronology of the troubles in peninsular Italy, 1040-42

After Rodriguez, 'Italia Bizantina', at

www.imperiobizantino.com/italiabizdef: accessed 2009 (dead link 2011).

Note: The border between the Lombard principality of Benevento and the Byzantine catepanate of Langobardia lay on the upper Ofanto River just west of Melfi.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Jan 1040: | Revolt in Byzantine Ascoli, NW of Melfi. |
| May 1040: | Revolts in Matera (inland NW of Taranto) and Mottola (between Matera and Taranto). |
| Nov 1040: | A new catepan, Michael Dokeianos, arrives with Varangians amongst his army. |
| Late 1040: | Retaliatory expedition by <i>Michael Dokeianos</i> – he punishes the rebels first at Bitonto, west of Bari; then at Ascoli. – At about this time, Arduin and William de Hauteville lead their battle-hardened Lombard and Norman troops back from Sicily. Arduin joins (early 1041 or late 1040) the rebellion and from Melfi proceeds to capture Venosa and Ascoli. |
| 16/17 Mar 1041: | Battle of Venosa or the Olivento, SE of Melfi: Arduin's <i>Normans and Lombards defeat Dokeianos</i> . The Olivento River is a southern tributary of the Ofanto. |
| 4 May 1041: | Battle near Montemaggiore, NE of Melfi, on the lower Ofanto River. <i>Dokeianos is again defeated</i> . |
| 3 Oct [or Sept] 1041: | Battle of Montepeloso, SSE of Melfi. <i>The new catepan Boioannes the younger is also defeated</i> . The emperor decides to send Maniakes to rescue the situation. |
| From February 1042: | Melus's son Argyros, having switched (late 1041) from Byzantine service to the rebel side, seizes control of Bari. He soon comes to an understanding with the Norman chiefs, and in February or May 1042 is elected, jointly by the Normans and the Lombard militia of Bari, as "Prince and Duke of [south] Italy" (Angold 1984: 27). |
| April 1042: | <i>Maniakes returns to Italy, arriving in Apulia (Taranto)</i> . May 1042: siege of Taranto. He defeats the rebel Lombards and Normans. |
| June 1042: | Proceeding from Taranto, Maniakes attacks Matera. |

June + 3 July 1042:	June: From Matera to Monopoli. Retaliation against the rebels at Monopoli. Then July: Siege of Giovinazzo near Bari.
June-Aug 1042:	Siege of Trani on the coast above Bari. <i>The emperor now (in July) decides to recall Maniaces.</i>
September 1042:	(a) Argyrus re-defects back to the imperial side. (b) A new catepan, Pardos, arrives at Otranto expecting to replace Maniaces. Pardos and his deputy Tubachi are arrested at Otranto, however, and executed by Maniaches, who is acclaimed emperor by his troops.
October 1042:	Negotiations before Bari.
Feb 1043:	Maniaces leaves Italy for the East.

1040-41:

1. fl. Christopher of Mytilene, poet and chief judge in Paphlagonia, northern Asia Minor.

He wrote a large collection of verse epigrams. One of his poems is a scathing satire about a collector of relics; he also makes fun of unsuccessful chariot drivers, cheated husbands, hypocritical monks and pseudo-intellectuals. Christopher's poetry is characterised by a witty tone not often found in Byzantine poetry. The mix of Christian and classical elements and the self-asserting intellectual elitism are distinguishing features.

2. The Lombards under Argyrus revolt in Romaic Italy. Or rather, Argyrus briefly joins (December 1041) a revolt that is underway.

Catepans of Italy: Michael, "qui et *Dokiano* [Michael Dokeianos] (or) *Duchiano*, AD 1041". Exagusto, *filius Bugiani* [Exaugustus, son of Boioannes] . . . AD 1042.

Arduin, the second Lombard Revolt, and the Normans

The Lombards of [southern Italy](#) revolted (1040) against their 'Greek' overlords and, as we have seen, *slew* (1041) the [catepan](#) *Michael Dulchiano* or Doukeianos. On [3 September 1041](#), they also defeated the new Byzantine catepan, Basil the Younger, the son of the great [Boioannes](#), and took him captive. Soon they were joined by the Lombards and Normans from [Melfi](#) under [Arduin](#).

George Maniakes, or more probably Michael Dokeianos, the catepan of Italy, refused to pay the 'Franks' (Norman mercenaries) their monthly salaries.

Alternatively the Normans felt they had received too little of the booty brought from Sicily. Their leader, the Greek-speaking Lombard *Ardouin*, went to see Maniakes, asking for his soldiers to be treated fairly and the situation to be remedied. The Byzantine leader insulted him and had him *flogged* (perhaps whipped with a war-flail; or, as Malaterra says, he was beaten with staves). This provoked Arduin's men to join (1041) the revolt. The beating, says Malaterra, took place in Sicily; William of Apulia (see below) says at Reggio in Calabria.

The historians Skylitzes and Attaleiates, who follow a pro-Maniakes line, ascribe this behaviour to Michael Dokeianos, but the Italian sources are divided, some claiming that Maniakes himself was largely responsible (notes to Amato's *The history of the Normans*, ed. Prescott N. Dunbar, G. A. Loud, 2004 pp.66-68).

William of Apulia writes thus in his *Deeds of Robert Guiscard*:

"Among the men enrolled [in Sicily] was Arduin, whose followers were partly Lombards, as well as Gauls [Normans] who had survived the defeat by the Greeks and who had fled from the battle against Basil [a back-reference to 1018].

Returning [from N Apulia, or Sicily?] after his triumph over the enemy, [Michael] *Dokianos* had distributed the booty to his Greek troops at the city of Reggio, but Arduin had received nothing and the poor man had remained unrewarded. He angrily summoned his men and denounced the Greeks for their sordid avarice, who gave to cowards the booty due to men - since *the Greeks were like women*. *Michael* [or perhaps Maniakes] was angry at these insults and ordered him [Arduin] to be stripped and flogged, as is the custom of the Greeks, to shame by this punishment the man who has been flogged for committing such a crime.

Furious at the indignity of this treatment, and determined not to leave the wrong which had been done him unrevenged, Arduin and his men left the camp of the Greeks in secret. A band of Greeks sent in pursuit caught up with him in open country, but when they engaged in battle the *Greeks were defeated* and 50 of them killed." - Online at www.leeds.ac.uk/history/weblearning/medievalhistorytextcentre/william%20ap%201.doc; accessed 2011.

William of Apulia has Arduin elaborating to the Normans at Aversa the story of his own wrongs and the 'effeminacy of the contemptible Greeks'. Arduin, a Lombard by nation, had apparently been whipped: 'Why should so desirable land as Apulia be left to a race so feeble [lit. feminine]?' - such was his argument, appealing at once to the Norman self-conceit and the Norman cupidity. —Thus Curtis, *Roger of Sicily*, London 1912, quoting William of Apulia, *Guill. Ap.*, [Gesta Roberti Wiscardi] bk. I., p. 255: '*Appuliae multimodae cum terra sit utilitatis foemeneis [sic: femineis] graecis cur permittatur haberi?*' Lit: 'As for Apulia, so variously useful a land, by the effeminate* Greeks, wherefore is it allowed to be possessed?'

(*) This was an old-standing Western prejudice. Already in 883-84, in his *Life of Charlemagne*, the Monk of St. Gall (usually identified with Notker Balbulus, or "the Stammerer") wrote of "the sluggish and unwarlike

Greek king". A very curious label for Basil I, famously one of the most vigorous and bellicose of Byzantine monarchs.

In 1040, a new insurrection broke out in Apulia against Romania (Byzantium). It was led by Arduin, a leader of the Sicilian expedition. On his return from Sicily, Arduin was appointed the official administrator (*topoteretes*: lieutenant-governor) of the Melfi area on behalf of the Empire. He attempted to make a place for himself in the region with the help of his former Norman comrades-in-arms, the Hauteville brothers. Together they inflicted severe defeats on the Byzantine army in 1041: see next. *The catepan (governor) of Apulia, Boioannes the younger, was imprisoned and sent to Benevento whose prince was still an ally of the Normans.* The Romaics now controlled only the southern part of Apulia.

Wikipedia, 2011: "Michael Doukeianos (Dulchiano in Italian), called *the Young*, was the catepan of Italy from 1040 to 1041. ... His first major act (1040) was to offer the rule of Melfi to the Greek-speaking Lombard Arduin with the title topoterites [deputy commander]. However, Arduin soon betrayed him and led his Norman mercenaries in support of the Apulian rebellion. On 16 March 1041, near Venosa,* on the Olivento, he [Doukeianos] met the Norman army and tried to negotiate. He failed and battle was joined at Montemaggiore** [halfway between Melfi and Canosa], a field that had served as the site for the famous battle of 216 BC and the first Norman engagement in the Mezzogiorno in 1018. Though the catepan had called up a large Varangian force from Bari, the battle was a rout and many of Michael's soldiers drowned in the Ofanto on the retreat."

(*) On the ancient Appian Way east of Melfi. A notional triangle with Foggia and Bari as two of its points has Venosa as a third. The Ofanto River lies north of Venosa.

(**) Barletta is on the coast halfway between Foggia and Bari. Proceeding up the Ofanto valley from Barletta, the key sites are, in turn: Cannae, Canosa, *Montemaggiore* and Melfi.

3. The Balkans: Byzantine-ruled Bulgaria is ordered to pay taxes *in money* (not in kind) (Treadgold 1997: 588); as noted, this provoked a major revolt under Peter Delyan or 'Deleanos', and the Bulgarians briefly seized about half the northern Balkans. By the end of the year they stormed Dyrrhachium, giving them an outlet to the Adriatic.

The rebellion was initially successful, but started to fall apart after it failed to take Thessaloniki (1041). Alousian, the brother of the deposed Tsar of Bulgaria, captured and blinded Deleanos, and continued the rebellion, but this ended in surrender to the Emperor. The Varangian commander Harald was present at this campaign, and was raised to the (minor) honour of *spatharokandidatos* for his part in it.

The Bulgarian Revolt

The Bulgarians under Petur Deljan, a former Byzantine captive or slave

claiming to be Tsar Samuel's grandson or nephew, captured Skopje in 1040. Treadgold 1997: 588 accepts that he may have been, as he claimed, a son of the late Bulgarian emperor Gabriel Radomir. However, the following year the rebels were defeated at Thessalonica. 'Deljan' was betrayed and the Byzantine Varangians, including Harold Hardrada (now aged about 26), captured him (1041). It is not clear whether Hardrada was as yet the unit's commander; but he probably was, since he was decorated by the emperor.

In 1040 a revitalised Bulgaria under Tsar Peter Deljan and his cousin Alusian dispatched an army to invade the Empire. When the news arrived, Emperor Michael IV was in Thessaloniki at the tomb of St Demetrios, consumed with guilt over his assassination of his predecessor, Emperor Romanus III Argyrus. Though in agonising pain from a disease which had caused his body to swell grotesquely and would soon kill him, Michael organised a counter-campaign and led the army into the field. A Bulgarian siege of Thessaloniki became so disorganised that the city's garrison was able to come out and destroy the besiegers and *the Bulgarian campaign collapsed* (Norwich Vol. 2, pp.286, 288)

Peter Deljan was the leader of a revolt in Bulgaria in 1040-41. He claimed descent from Samuel, the great king of Bulgaria during the reign of Basil II, d. 1025. According to some he had been a slave at Byzantium, but fled from the city. The rebels were at first highly successful and the emperor barely escaped with his life from Salonica.

The revolt itself was probably caused by tax reforms implemented by John the Orphanotrophos which *replaced in-kind payments with cash*. The Bulgarians were angry because of the unjust exactions of John. Unlike Basil II, who respected the native methods of paying taxes in kind, John had invented new tribute and was ruthless in collecting it in money. The rebellion is recounted by Psellos, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, IV.39-49, pp. 75-79, and by Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 410-414.

1040-63: Persia: Toghril I, first 'Seljuq' [Ghuzz Turkish] ruler. He had seized Nishapur in 1038.

1041:

1a. Macedonia: A large Byzantine army proceeded against Delyan's Bulgarians, moving constantly in a battle formation (Herrin 2007: 222). As related by Cecaumenos, the Norwegian Prince and later King Harald Hardråde was part of this expedition, leading perhaps 500 **Varangians**.

From Thessaloniki the Byzantines penetrated into Bulgarian territory and defeated the Bulgarians at Ostrovo (Greek Arnissa, near today's Greek-FYROM border) in the late summer of 1041. It seems that the Varangians had a decisive role in the victory as their chief is hailed in the Norse sagas as the "devastator or 'burner' of Bulgaria" (*Bolgara brennir*) (D'Amato 2007: 8). Though recently blinded, Petar Delyan ("Delianos") was in command of the army. His fate is unknown; he either perished in the battle or was captured and taken to Constantinople.

1b. The west Balkans: The army of Michael IV, marching against the rebels,

advances on Prilep in today's FYROM. On the way, it had to break through a large wooden barricade in a gorge or defile built by Manuel Ibatzes, an ally of the late Bulgarian rebel Peter Deljan (Skylitzes 414; McGeer p.342). The Bulgarian pretender, Alusian, decides to submit to Michael in return for a pardon; and the revolt ends.

2. Italy: In Apulia, the insurgent Normans under William ("Iron Arm") de Hauteville, Robert Guiscard's eldest half-brother, defeat the Byzantines in a series of battles. William takes the title 'Count of Apulia'. The Normans briefly conquer all of South Italy except for lower Apulia – Bari, Taranto, Brindisi and Otranto.

Lupus Prot.: *"Anno 1041. descendit Dulchianus a Sicilia ivitque Asculum et mense Martij Arduinus Lombardus convocavit Normannos, in Apulia in Civitate Melfiae et praedictus Dulchianus fecit proelium cum Normannis et ceciderunt Graeci et mense Maii iterum proeliati sunt Normanni fer. IIII. Cum Graecis et fugit Dulchianus in Barum".* – 'Dokeianos arrives from Sicily and proceeds to Ascoli, and in March Arduin the Lombard gathers the Normans in Apulia at the town of Melfi, and the previously mentioned Dokeianos makes battle [at the Olivento] with the Normans, and the Greeks fall (i.e. are defeated), and on 4 May again the Normans clash with the Greeks [at the Ofanto], and Dokeianos flees to Bari.'

Dokeianos is twice defeated in battle with the Normans. In both clashes – at Venosa on the Olivento River near Melfi on 17 March and on the Ofanto River near Montemaggiore on 4 May – the Normans won against superior Romaic numbers.

Despite a considerable supremacy in numbers, the Greeks were beaten near Venosa in the Olivento valley (17 March 1041), then at Monte Maggiore at the Ofanto River (4 April), where supposedly '18,000' Byzantines faced supposedly '**3,000 Normans**' and their allies. The latter figure is plausible; the former not. The defeat was received unsympathetically in Constantinople, and Doceanus was replaced.

Styles of Fighting

"The way of fighting of the Normans in the 11th century", writes Amatuuccio, "appears now very far from that described for the 'blond peoples' (Franks and Lombards) by the great Byzantine strategists of earlier centuries. They were [earlier] depicted as tribal hordes that went to the attack without order, discipline or tactical purpose, grouped in clans around their own leaders. They were easy prey for the shrewd tactical manoeuvres of the Byzantines.

Now, however, the Normans were very differently organised: formed up in several lines, use of a rearguard, combined operations between cavalry and infantry, feigned retreats etc. All the evidence shows a good level of tactical organization.

Certainly *they were still far from the imperial standard, with its rigid division in units, formed in several lines, and its logistical sophistication etc;* but this, perhaps, constituted more of a handicap than an advantage. The Norman tactical organisation was 'lighter', faster, agile, and it succeeded

against the elephant-like [sic!] military bureaucracy of the Byzantines. But, above all, the fundamental difference was that the Byzantine army was based on a cohesion and a discipline due to an intense training that was codified in the rules of the numerous military treatises. In the Roman tradition the Byzantine army imposed a sense of duty and discipline on the enlisted men through long training and rigorous rules. On the other side, the Norman cavalymen had other motivating forces that created order and cohesion and rendered them trained: the desire to win, the Germanic sense of honour and fidelity to the leader. The first point was of fundamental importance. In fact, *the strategic superiority of the Normans was due above all to the fact that they fought for conquest*: for everyone, if they won a battle, meant to earn lands and booty. Their Byzantine and local Italian adversaries were, instead, simple soldiers, in the literal sense of the term: *they fought for their wages*, rather than the mirage of career and honours." —My trans. MO'R: from Giovanni Amatuuccio, "Fino alle mura di Babilonia". Aspetti militari della conquista normanna del Sud ["To the Walls of Babylon': Military aspects of the Norman conquest of the South"], *Rassegna Storica Salernitana*, n.30 (1998). Online, 2009, at http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/articles/amatuuccio1.htm#_ftnref6.

(a) Battle of the Olivento or Venosa, 17 or 21 March 1041:

Venosa lies on the ancient Appian Way east of Melfi. The Olivento is an upper tributary of the Ofanto. The *Annales Barenses* give 17 March, while Leo Marsicanus (Leo of Ostia) [fl. 1096] says 21 March.

The day before the battle, during negotiations at Melfi about when and where to fight, says Malaterra, one of the Normans, Hugh Tuboeuf [Ugo Tutabovi, Latin *Tudebusis*], tried to sow panic among the Greek troops by knocking out the horse of a Greek herald with one punch of his mailed fist. The herald reported this to Dokeianos but the catepan kept it a secret from the ranks of the Byzantine army, lest they be terrified, imagining the Normans to be superhuman.

According to William of Apulia, Book 1: 257, the Normans at the Olivento "had an army of but 500 infantry and seven hundred knights" (**1,200 men**). This looks if anything like an underestimate. Cf Schlumberger, III, ch3: "*De nombreux Apuliens « conterati » révoltés contre Constantinople, enrôlés par Arduin, avaient grossi les rangs de l'armée des envahisseurs normands accourus de Melfi avec beaucoup de nouvelles recrues venues de Normandie.*" – 'Many of the Apulian "conterati" who had revolted against Constantinople and been enlisted by Arduin, and with many new recruits arrived from Normandy, had enlarged the ranks of the army of the Norman invaders that had come out quickly (*accourus*: sortied) from Melfi.'

Malaterra says 500 Norman and Lombard horse-soldiers faced the absurd figure of "60,000" Greeks; if we take a zero off, we have a more plausible (but probably still too high) figure of 6,000 imperial troops. The numbers for the rebels are entirely credible; but we must not imagine that Dokeianos had more than (say) three times those of his opponents or **3,600 men**.

William says "only a few" of the rebels were protected by hauberks [mail tunics] and shields (say 200 of the 700 cavalry). The foot soldiers were

advised to station themselves on the left and right flanks; a few horsemen were posted with them to provide a reinforcement to stiffen the flanks. In other words, *the Norman cavalry formed the centre of the first line.*

Skylitzes: (*March 1041*): "When the Franks (Normans) took up arms against him, he [Dokeianos] refused to gather the entire Byzantine forces ["the whole of his army"] to fight them but took only one unit [*tagma*, regiment or battalion], that of the Opsikion, and part of the Thrakesion [theme]*, [and] engaged in battle . . . near the river Amphidos [Aufidius: Ofanto], was defeated, lost the better part of his army, and escaped shamefully to Cannae" [i.e. down the valley] (trans. Wortley p.401; other translations bracketed). There were also Varangians the Byzantine side (Benedikz 2007: 70).

(*) In earlier centuries the Opsikion theme totalled 6,000 men and the Thracesian theme had 10,000 troops. But only detachments could have been serving in Italy; and we have no information about how large they were. The standard infantry unit in the years 950-1050 was the *taxiarchy* of 1,000 men (McGeer, p.203; Treadgold, *Army* p.113); quite possibly this was what Skylitzes meant by 'tagma'. The standard cavalry unit was 500 strong (10 *banda* each of 50 men: McGeer p.284, Treadgold p.114). If so, then one might guess that Dokeianos took with him 1,500 Opsikians and 750 Thrakesians (total 2,250). Adding the Varangians that Skylitzes fails to mention: say 500 men; and say 1,000 local Byzantino-Italian troops, we arrive at 3,750. I emphasise this is purely a half-educated guess.

The Byzantine forces, under the Catepan or provincial governor Michael Dokeianos, subdivided in many contingents, had a numerical superiority over the Norman invaders. The latter comprised approximately 700 horse-soldiers and 500 others under the command of the count of Aversa, Rainulfo, and Arduino of Milan. We may guess therefore, imagining a ratio of 3:1, that Dokeianos led around 3,600 men including a contingent of Varangians.

In line with their 'scientific' tactics, the Byzantines attacked in successive waves, seeking to weaken the Norman cavalry. The catepan, believing he has overcome the Normans, launches a final onslaught with picked troops, but the Normans manage to force back the cavalry and counterattack, decimating the Byzantine forces.

William of Apulia: "After these troops had been thus instructed and placed on each flank, a column of [Norman] cavalry advanced a little way forward. A column of Greeks was sent out against them, for *it is not their custom to engage all their forces at the first shock, they rather* [as prescribed in their *Taktika* or military manuals: MO'R] *send another troop after the first*, so that while the enemy weakens their own strength increases and their troops are emboldened. So, when their cavalry commander sees the enemy resisting, he makes a *sudden attack with the bulk of the remaining crack troops*, thus restoring the morale of his own men and usually driving the enemy back in flight."

“ . . . This victory [says William] greatly strengthened the morale of the Gauls, and from now on *they no longer feared to fight the Greeks.*”

(b) **Battle of Monte Maggiore**, 4 May 1041:

Montemaggiore is on the middle section of the Ofanto (Aufidius) River, downstream from Melfi and N of Venosa. It has been identified with the present-day *commune* of Orsara di Puglia on the left bank of the Cervaro (Italian Wikipedia 2011, under ‘La Battaglia di Montemaggiore’).

Instead of learning a lesson after his earlier defeat, “being arrogant, Dokeianos still did not engage his entire army against the enemy, but took again his vanquished troops with some Pisidians and Lykaonians** only [- also some Varangians, MO’R]”. Dokeianos “fought against the enemy (Normans) who had been joined by a large number of Italians from the Po and the foothills of the Alps, and was *routed* at Horai” (Skylitzes, in PBW under ‘Michael Dok.’; also trans. Wortley p.401).

(**) Pisidia and Lykaonia were regimental districts (*turmai*) within the Asian theme (province) of the Anatolics. Each had had 5,000 men in the 9th century. But again we cannot believe that the detachments in Italy were very large. In the discussion that follows, we guess that Dokeianos fielded only about 4,000 men altogether.

A Norman-led Italian force of 2,000 (the figure given in the *Annales Barenses*) including 700 horse-soldiers and former imperial mercenaries turned rebels—William ‘Iron-Arm’ de Hauteville among them—defeats a polyglot Byzantine force of perhaps 4,000 under the Catepan of Longobardia, Dokeianos. Both sides included Lombard Italians.

The Imperial army included some Varangian and Rhos units; detachments from the Opsikion and Thrakesion themes; and local ‘Greek’ militia probably from Calabria and *Capitanata* (Lombards from far northern Apulia). The *Annales Barenses* 54.33-55.2 mention men from the Anatolikon, the Opsikion, Russia (*Rhos*: Varangians), Thrace [sic: probably Thrakesion]*, Calabria, Longobardia and the Capitanate (upper northern Apulia). It is not clear whether all of these units actually participated in the battle. In any event, the *Annales*’ figure of “18,000” troops on the Byzantine side can be rejected as vastly exaggerated. See entry for 1042.

PBW: “Michael Dokeianos refused to come out in full force against the rebellious Normans, mobilising *only troops from two themes*. [William of Apulia mentions *three*: the Anatolikon, Opsikion and Thrakesion.] He was badly defeated, with heavy losses in Russian troops [Varangians] and those from [the] *Opsikion*. Michael and the survivors fled [inland, south] to Montepeloso.” And thence to Bari.

(*) The large *Thrakesion* or Thracesian theme (*thema*, province) comprised part of western Asia Minor; it is not to be confused with the small Theme of Thrace (Gk *Thrake*) in Europe, which at this time was just one of several themes in the wider geographical region of Thrace

(map in Treadgold 1995: 82).

William of Apulia writes thus:

"Here came from Sicily into Lombardy [S Italy] Michael the *protospatharios* and Catepan. . . then in the month of May [1041], having collected all the Greeks together in one place at Mons Maior [Italian: Monte Maggiore], near the river Aufidius, battle was joined as the fourth day began, where perished many *Natulichi* [i.e. Greek troops from the Anatolikon theme] and *Obsequiani* [men of the Opsikion], *Russi* [Varangians], *Trachici* [Thrakesians], Calabrians and Lombards, and people from the catepanate [presumably Lombardo-Italian peasants].* Retreating from there in confusion with a few men, the rest only half-alive, for fear of the savage Normans, Michael wrote to Sicily and [before September: see next] there came the wretched [*miseri*, 'poor'] Macedonians themselves and the Paulicians and Calabrians."

Amato says more on the Byzantine side died by drowning, when they tried to flee across the Ofanto, than in battle (ed. Dunbar & Loud p.73)

(*) Norwich supposes that Dokeianos' troops included local Lombard Italian peasants and villagers press-ganged into service (*Normans* p.61).

The *Annales Barenses* say that after the defeat of Montemaggiore (above), among the troops called from Sicily against the Normans were "*miseri Macedones*": 'wretched' or second-class Macedonians. They would have been Thematic troops, to be distinguished, D'Amato believes, from the élite regiment of the *Phoidheratoi* ('Federates'). In truth, the unit or units called the 'tagmata of the *Phoidheratoi* of Lycaonia and Pisida' is more probably a reference to the *turma* (district and regiment) called the Phoidheratoi. As we know from Treadgold, *Army* p.99, it was the senior turma of three *within the theme of the Anatolics*. That is to say: not an elite unit but rather a run-of-the-mill thematic regiment. Evidently the only elite troops present were the Varangians.

In the 9th century the Federates had numbered 5,000 and the troops of Italy amounted to 2,000: whether they had the same numbers in 1041 we do not know.

Reference is made to high casualties among the Varangians or Rhos at Montemaggiore: ". . . much of Dokeianos' army was drowned in the river Ofanto, which was in full flood" (Benedikz 2007: 70). The army of Exaugustus Boioannes that was later disastrously defeated at Monte Siricolo [Montepeloso: see next] also contained Varangians. "*All the fortified towns of Apulia, Bari (the most important), Monopoli* [down the coast from Bari], *Giovenazzo* [up the coast from Bari] *and several other cities* abandoned their alliance with the Greeks and came to an agreement with the Franks [Normans]", writes William of Apulia.

(c) **Battle of Montepeloso**, 3 Sept 1041:

Montepeloso is or was in upper Basilicata (as it now is); it lay SE of Melfi and S of Venosa. The Normans camped at nearby Monte Serico, or 20 km NE of Acerenza.

The new catepan Exaugustus Boioannes arrived from the East with only a Varangian contingent.

Schlumberger, III, ch3: "*Skylitzès dit expressément que le nouveau catépan n'amena de Constantinople aucune troupe fraîche, mais qu'il se vit réduit à reprendre la lutte avec le peu qui restait de forces impériales en Italie. . . . Tout au contraire de Skylitzès, Aimé et Léon d'Ostie affirment, . . . , que le basileus envoya à Exaugustos de nouveaux contingents vœrings, c'est-à-dire russes. Il envoya aussi de grandes sommes en numéraire.* – 'Skylitzes says expressly that the new catepan did not bring any fresh troops from Constantinople but was obliged to renew the struggle with just the few remaining imperial forces in Italy. ... Contradicting Skylitzes, Amato and Leo of Ostia state, . . . , that the basileus sent Exaugustos a new contingent of Værings, i.e. Russians [Varangians]. He sent also great sums in cash.' (Schlumberger prefers to believe Skylitzes but without saying why.)

As noted, a heterogeneous force of regulars or semi-regular troops had been called back to the mainland from Sicily, and Exaugustus also had available some local "indigenous auxiliaries of Greek descent" [Lat. *indigenae Danais*: Greek-speaking Apulians] and men from Calabria. Amatus, II: 26, mentions "Varangians, Apulians and Calabrians" among the dead; and the *Annales Barenses* speak of "poor Macedonians" among Boioannes' troops, "poor" meaning perhaps second-class or perhaps pitiable: "all the poor Macedonians were killed". William of Apulia says,

"the Greeks had left many allies in the mountains, to the safety of which they could return if it should be necessary. These [*Danais*: ethnic Greek] *natives* came down to help them":-

Referunt ad bella paratos,

They [the Normans scouts] bring back/return news that the Greeks are] ready for war

Et non mutata mutatum gente magistrum.

'And (while) the chief/general is changed, the people are not' [such was the report of the Norman scouts]

Nil metuunt. Multi sociis in monte relictis,

[so] They [the Normans] are fearing nothing. With (by/from/at) many allies (were) left/ remaining/ in the mountains

Quo tuti redeant, fuerit si forte necesse,

Where they might safely fall back, if it were by chance necessary

Indigenae Danais [sic: Danaans*, Greeks] *descendunt auxiliari*.**

Greek natives descend/are descending to be of help

Campi planicie populus convenit uterque...

and which (*uterque*) on the level plains the multitude (i.e. the two armies) came together [to fight]...

(*) *Danaos* in Virgil.

(**) In Latin the verb-form *auxiliari* means 'to be helpful' or 'help-bringing'. As an adjective *auxiliari* means 'auxiliary'. And 'auxiliaries' (the noun) is *auxilarii*: double-l.

William also mentions Paulicians, i.e. thematic troops from Thrace. Thus –

here we must guess – Boioannes' field army may have numbered of the order of 5,000 men. The *Barenses* say that "700" Normans led by Atenulf of Benevento defeated "10,000" imperials. This is impossible to accept. We may, however, guess that "700" referred only the Norman knights and that (say) 2,000+ Norman foot and allied Lombards should be added, for a total of perhaps 3,000 men.

The catepan decided on trying to isolate the [Lombard](#) and Norman rebels in [Melfi](#) by camping near [Montepeloso](#), which is SE of Melfi in today's NE Basilicata, between Potenza and Gravina. Led by Atenulf, brother of the prince of Benevento, the [Normans](#) sortied from Melfi and camped in a 'castle' (read: "fortified village") on the [Monte Siricolo](#) near Montepeloso. They captured a convoy of livestock meant for the Greek camp and forced a battle on [3 September](#) 1041. (Norwich, *Normans* p.61. citing Leo of Ostia and Amatus).

Schlumberger, III, ch3: *"Afin de forcer les Grecs à abandonner la défensive où les maintenait probablement l'attente de nouveaux renforts, à quitter leurs retranchements et à accepter le combat dans la plaine située entre les deux hauteurs, les Normands interceptèrent un grand convoi de bétail destiné à l'ennemi. La manœuvre réussit parfaitement. Les Grecs, irrités de cet échec, craignant peut-être de manquer de vivres, engagèrent la lutte le 3 septembre après avoir été, racontent les chroniqueurs, harangués par Exaugustos." . . . Les Impériaux, surtout les contingents des thèmes occidentaux, « les Macédoniens », qui avaient bravement résisté sans quitter leurs positions, les Russes aussi en grand nombre, périrent presque tous sous les coups des Normands. Le reste des soldats du basileus, les miliciens des Pouilles et des Calabres surtout, furent effroyablement décimés. Le chroniqueur Aimé nous les montre s'enfuyant dans les bois, probablement les forêts de l'Apennin, poursuivis courageusement dans ces sombres défilés par les Normands."*

– 'In order to force the Greeks to give up the defence, where they held tight, probably waiting for new reinforcements, and to leave their trenches to accept combat in the plain that lay between the two heights, the Normans intercepted a large convoy of cattle* intended for the enemy. The operation succeeded perfectly. The Greeks, enraged by this setback, perhaps fearing the loss of fresh food, began the fight on 3 September after having been, as the chroniclers relate, harangued by Exaugustos."

"... the Imperials, especially the contingents from the Western themes, 'the Macedonians', who had bravely resisted without leaving their positions, a great number of Russians [sic: Varangians] too, almost all perished under the blows of the Normans. The rest of the Basileus's soldiers, the Puglian and Calabrian militia-men especially, were horribly decimated. The chronicler Amato depicts them fleeing into the woods, probably the forests of the Apennines, pursued courageously through dark defiles by the Normans.' —My trans. MO'R.

Boioannes was captured and taken to Benevento.

(*) Transhumance? There is a transhumance trail, the Trattura Regio, that runs northeast from Potenza towards Venosa. – On the other hand, September was a bit early for cattle to be coming down from the Apennines.

"Open-range cattle raising, frequently transhumant, was certainly practised in places: in Apulia, for example": Michael Postan, H. J. Habakkuk -*The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: The agrarian life*, 1966, p.381.

The great plain called the Tavoliere delle Puglie, 'the granary of Italy', runs south to the Ofanto; it was/is sheep, wheat and cattle country.

3. Sicily: When Maniakes was recalled to Constantinople, the Arabs under the Kalbite ruler 'Samsam' (al-Hasan as-Samsam b. Yusuf: his full name was al-Hasan b. Abi'l-Futuh 'Samsam al-Dawla' was a title he received from the Fatimid caliph; it means 'sword of the state') **re-took Syracuse**. Cf 1042-43.

Michael IV, after having recalled George Maniakes [July-August 1042], entrusted the leadership of military operations in Sicily to his brother-in-law Stephen and gave him as his assistant the head eunuch Basil Padiaditus, the *praepositus* or grand chamberlain. The incompetence of the two leaders led to the loss of the reconquered parts of Sicily. Stephen and Basil had to take refuge in Italy proper (Cedr. II 523, 525, cited by Guiland).

George Maniakes had returned to campaign in southern Italy from 1041 onwards, and (see below) was largely successful in destroying the old ex-Lombard kingdom. However, the destruction of "Lombard" (Latin-Italian) power in this region would merely leave a vacuum into which the Normans were destined to step. William de Hauteville will emerge from this campaign with official recognition, to be made putative Count of Apulia (1043).

4. 10 Dec.: d. emperor Michael IV, evidently from epilepsy or dropsy [internal swelling]; he was just 31. - Michael V Kalaphates rules from 10 Dec 1041 to 21 April 1042.

1041-42: MICHAEL V 'the Caulker', Gk: *Kalaphates*

So-called because his father was a naval engineer. Nephew of John the Orphanotrophus, the power behind the throne, and adopted son of John's brother, Michael IV.

Michael V was aged about 26 at accession. He ruled for four months and 11 days.

1041:

1. Armenia: The Byzantines attempted to take Ani by force but were beaten with great loss, and the Armenians proclaimed a new king, the 18-year-old Gagik II. See 1044.

"The Empire attempted", writes Bedrosian, "to induce various powerful Armenian lords to will their hereditary lands to itself in exchange for new

lands elsewhere. Thus did the last king of Vaspurakan [south and east of Lake Van], Senek'erim Arcruni [Seneqerim Ioan], leave southern Armenia to settle in Byzantine Sebastia/Sivas (1021) which was given to him >>in perpetuity<<." Supposedly tens of thousands of Armenians from Vaspurakan accompanied Senek'erim. By a similar route, the Empire acquired the Ani-Shirak kingdom in 1040 [cf 1044-45]. The last ruler of that state also received lands in Byzantine Cappadocia, and also quit Greater Armenia with thousands of his followers.

"The consequences of Byzantine pressure from the west were twofold. First, *numerous parts of Greater Armenia were stripped of their natural military defenders*, thereby facilitating Saljuq (Turkish) penetration. Second, various areas of Cappadocia, North Syria, Cilicia and Georgia became Armenized or re-Armenized with *tens of thousands of emigrants from Greater Armenia*. The pace of emigration quickened with the Saljuq invasions" (Bedrosian, <http://rbedrosian.com/atmi1.htm>).

2. Italy: The Lombard Arduin, *topoteretes** - commander or governor - of Byzantine Melfi, betrays his oath of loyalty to the Byzantines (late 1041) . With a force of Norman mercenaries, he marches to support the Lombard rebels in Apulia (early 1042). *The Normans seize Melfi from the Byzantines*. Meanwhile, as described earlier, the rebels have defeated the Byzantines at the Olivento and Montepeloso. *This gave them control of the upper third of Apulia*.

(*) A subordinate commander, in this case under the *katepano*. *Topoteretes* was the title of the two deputy commanders of a regiment of the Tagmata or a fleet. In a theme, the same rank was called *turmarch*. Equivalent perhaps to our senior colonel or brigadier-general.

(16/17 Mar): As noted earlier, a Byzantine army under the Catepan or *katepano* Michael Doukeianos meets the Norman force under Arduin on the river Olivento, near Venosa in N Apulia. Michael unsuccessfully attempts to negotiate with the Normans and is forced to fight. The Byzantines are defeated.

The two armies again joined in battle, on 4 May, at Montemaggiore, upstream from Cannae. Again the result was a Norman victory during which many Byzantines, including part of the elite Varangian Guard, were drowned while retreating across the Ofanto. After this defeat, Catepan Michael was transferred back to Sicily.

In the *Annales Barenses* of 1041 we have mention of troops in Southern Italy from the Opsikion, Thrakesion and Anatolikòn themes. Skylitzes for 1041 also mentions troops of the 'tagmata of the *Phoideratoi* [Federates] of Lycaonia and Pisidia'. As explained above, they were almost certainly Thematic troops from the Anatolikon theme.

In August, Exaugustus* Boïoannes (It.: Exaugusto *Bugiano*), son of Basil Boioannes, arrives in Italy as the new Byzantine catepan of Apulia/Italy. The only first-class troops that Boïoannes the younger has at his disposal to face the Normans and Lombards are a contingent of Varangians [*let us guess: 1,000 men?*] along with some second-class troops [*?1,000 men*] brought over

from Sicily. Amato or Amatus (II: 26) also mentions Apulians and Calabrians [1,000 men?] in the Byzantine force (Amato, *The history of the Normans*, ed. Prescott N. Dunbar, G. A. Loud, 2004 p.74). Nevertheless, the catepan attempts to move against the rebels at Melfi.

(3 Sept): The army of Exaugustus Boioannes is defeated by the Normans at Montepeloso near Melfi and he is taken prisoner. Supposedly "700" Normans defeated "10,000" 'Greeks' (Jansen et al. p.494). As our bracketed guesses indicate (see above), there may have been as few as 3,000 troops on the Byzantine side.

The Normans turned the catepan over to their new leader Atenulf, the Lombard Prince of Benevento, who made him *walk in chains* to Benevento.

(*) This was a name, not a title.

3. Italy: The **theme of Loukania** or Lucania, between Calabria and Apulia, is *first mentioned in 1042*, and probably does not date to much earlier (thus Stephenson in Magdalino 2003: 139). – It must be a guess, but if each of Calabria, Loukania and Apulia was garrisoned with the usual allocation of 2,000 soldiers of a lesser Theme, then the professional and semi-professional troops of Byzantine Italy may have numbered 6,000 men.

Rodriquez notes that the **theme of Lucania** is known only from a document dated November 1042 by its strategos Eustathius Skepides, who dictates a sentence in favour of the abbot of the monastery of San Nicola in the valley of the Lao, west of Cassano* allo Ionio. The theme had probably been established in 1035 after the alliance with the Sicilian Emirate. It possibly had short life, as it is not mentioned in the decree of Duke Argyros on his arrival in Italy in 1051.

The Theme was constituted around Cassano in N Calabria in the opinion of Von Falkenhausen; or headquartered at Tursi** in present-day S Basilicata according to Guillou [Guillou, 'La Lucanie Byzantine: Etude de geographic historique', *Byzantion*, 35 (1965), 119-49]. It covered, in the opinion of the latter, the territories of *Latinianon*, which is the Agri valley: inland from the top of the Gulf of Taranto; *Mercurion* which is the Lao or Laino valley, part of today's Pollino national park, through which the modern Basilicata-Calabrian border runs; and *Lagonegro**** west of the Pollino park, near the N border of modern Calabria.

In other words: Byzantine Lucania comprised the southern sector of modern Basilicata.

(*) Cassano allo Ionio lies south of the Pollino park; inland from the west coast of the Gulf of Taranto

(**) Tursi lies a little inland from the top (*centre*) of the Gulf of Taranto and to the NE of Pollino national park.

(***) Lagonegro lies in the segment of Basilicata that reaches west to the Tyrrhenian Sea – in the tongue of land between presentday

Campania and Calabria.

1041/42:

Italy: Following the death of his patron, emperor Michael IV, Argyrus defects (December 1041) from the Byzantine side and goes over to the rebels. - Thus the Italian Wikipedia, 2010, under 'Argiro'. In February 1042 he is elected leader of the rebels. See there.

Catepans of Italy: *Exagusto, filius Bugiani praefati* [Exaugustus, son of the prefect Boioannes], A. C. 1042 [sic: correctly 1041]. *Georgius Maniaces, a Michaele in Apuliam missus* ["George Maniakes, by Michael sent to Apulia"], A. C. 1043. [sic: actually 1042] *ubi et purpuram induit* ["where he assumes the purple"]. - *Lexicon Univerale*, p.771, by J J Hofmann, died 1706. Copy online.

1042:

1. Constantinople: Michael relegates the dowager empress Zoe to a convent and has the patriarch arrested (April 1042). This leads to a massive popular revolt in the capital. Michael's mail-clad troops try to put down the unarmed or half-armed citizenry. Even women and children joined in the rioting in defence of the empress. Three days of anarchy sees some 3,000 killed (Norwich 1993: 300). Finally Zoe's sister Theodora intervenes, and Michael (aged 27) is **deposed and blinded and castrated**.

Elements of the Varangian Guard played a role in his deposition. According to one of the Icelandic sagas, the *Heimskringla*, it was indeed Hadrada who did the blinding (Davidson p.225).

1042: Russian (Varangian) and other troops were used to arrest the Patriarch. First mention of *Tauroskythai* as members of the palace guard, also of axe bearers guarding at a state reception. Davidson argues, citing Psellus, that these "young Scythian eunuchs" were probably Slav or Pecheneg mercenaries serving as Michael's bodyguard; but she adds that the Varangian Guard was not disbanded (Davidson 1976: 180).

Dawson: "The Varangians were almost always *uncompromisingly loyal to the incumbent Emperor*. The exceptions to this occur in situations manifesting a combination of popular discontent, Varangian disaffection, and the presence of a highly legitimate replacement. The clearest example of this was the overthrow of Michael V in 1042, wherein the Guard became the spearhead of widespread discontent caused by Michael's policies and attempts to purge the upper bureaucracy and the royal family" (Dawson: 'The Uses of the Varangian Guard', *Varangian Voice*, no. 24, October 1992, pp. 34-5).

Popular discontent: In 1042 during the popular rebellion that overthrew Emperor Michael V and brought Zoe to the throne, Psellos remarked with amazement that some women, "whom nobody till then had seen outside the women's quarters [of the palace], [were] appearing in public shouting and beating their breasts and lamenting terribly at the empress's misfortune".

Psellos offers a vivid account of the riot and the blinding of Michael V and his

uncle Constantine the Nobilissimus; see *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* V. 26-50.

PBW: Triple attack of people on palace met by triple imperial forces: some 3,000 people killed. Konstantinos *nobilissimos* and Michael V used regular troops on the mob, with success for a time, but they were overcome by numbers. Psellos, who was first aware of the revolt from inside the palace (where he worked as a secretary) was most impressed by the role of women, who were particularly angry at the insult to Zoe. He rode through the streets and so was reporting what he had seen.

3. For 7 weeks 3 days: After Michael's fall, **ZOE**, niece of Basil II and daughter of Constantine VII, is briefly empress-regent with her sister **THEODORA**. The two sisters were jointly proclaimed empress 21 April 1042. They were acclaimed as autokratores ('emperors'), and in the seven weeks that followed (21 April to 12 June) they issued coinage and ruled jointly, though as the junior empress, Theodora sat slightly behind Zoe during their court audiences (Garland, DIR: 'Zoe').

3. The Balkans: The new emperor Constantine Monomachus tasks Michael, the new Byzantine *katepan* or regional governor of Dyrrhachium, to lead a punitive expedition against the Serbs of the Principality of Zeta (Duklja) – today's Montenegro. The expedition is ambushed and defeated by prince Stefan Vojislav (Stephenson 2000: 134; Treadgold 1997: 589). This secured Zeta's independence from the empire.

After defeating Macedonian rebels and regaining Drac in modern Albania, Byzantium and its allies attacked Dioclea (Duklja or Zeta) in 1042/43 from all sides. On the imperialist side, the Slav leaders were the zhupan Ljutovid of Zahumlje; the head (*ban*) of the tribal state of Bosnia; and the zhupan of central Serbia (Raska). Evidently most of the "60,000" troops under Michael (if he was the leader) were loyal Slavs—Fine 1991: 206 has Ljutovid of Zahumlje as the commander. A figure of 6,000 is more likely. *The attackers were ambushed and suffered a heavy defeat* ("35,000" dead – 3,500 would be more credible) at Tudemili, near Bar, the Montenegrin port town near present-day Albania. The Byzantine emperor agreed to recognise Doclea's (Duklja's) independence, and to forge a friendship and alliance with Mihailo, the son of Vojislav, giving him the elevated title of *protospatharius*.

Basil's Niece Zoë

She was married in turn to three emperors:

1. Romanus III Argyrus, 1028-34. Zoe was aged about 50 when he took the throne; Romanus was about 60.

2. Michael V, 1034-41, younger brother of the eunuch John the Orphanotrophus. Zoe was aged about 56 when he assumed the purple. Michael was about 24.

Zoe herself briefly reigned alone in 1042, aged about 64.

3. Constantine IX Monomachos, 1042-55. He married Zoe and was also crowned as emperor on 12 June 1042.

1042-55: CONSTANTINE IX Monomachos – literally 'the warrior', 'one who fights alone'; but this was his family name, not a sobriquet (Norwich 1993: 306).

In Greek his full title was: *Konstantinos en Christôi tōi Theōi Autokratōr pistos Basileus Rhomaiōn ho Monomachos*, 'Constantine in Christ the God faithful, emperor [and] sovereign of the Romans, the Monomachos'. *Pistos* = 'trustworthy; convinced, persuaded (believer); trusting (in God)'.

Aged about 42 at accession, Constantine became the third husband of the "elderly, passionate and unbalanced" Empress Zoe, aged about 64 – as Dudley & Lang call her.

He was a pleasant non-entity chosen for his weakness, and dominated by his mistress Maria Scleraina, a member of the noble Sclerus family. But he seems at least to have been good-looking: "He was praised for his physical beauty; he had such brilliant whiteness that gold and jewels were heavy and false adjuncts to his personal grandeur" (Christophoros of Mytilene 54.1-4, quoted in PBW).

The ominous paradigm shift in the East, the arrival of the Seljuk Turks, occurred under Constantine's watch, and his own generation and those that followed held him accountable. Few disputed the verdict of John Zonaras a century later: "That man [Constantine IX] will be judged responsible by the impartially minded for the subjection of the eastern parts of the Empire by the barbarian spear."

Constantine IX **adulterated the gold coinage** to about 75% pure but there was increased circulation of silver and copper, "*a clear sign of greater economic activity and growth of an urban economy*" (says Mango p.57). Treadgold on the other hand calls the debasement "disastrous": "There cannot be much doubt that the disastrous debasement of the nomisma beginning in the reign of Constantine IX was intended to **reduce the cost of the now useless army**" (1995: 140). But cf 1047-48.

At the start of the reign, coins were about 92% pure, that is un-debased: 92% being the best that medieval metallurgists could achieve; but by the end of his reign coins averaged about 75%. —Cecile Morrisson, in *Travaux et Memoires* vol 6, 1976.

1042:

1a. Zoe briefly reigns as empress regnant with her sister (April-June 1042). She or they appointed Nikolaos *domestikos ton scholon* [army commander] of the East, Konstantinos Kabasilas *doux* of the West, and Georgios Maniakes

magistros and *strategos autokrator* in Italy (Skylitzes 422.20-26 and Zonaras 17.22.2, quoted in PBW).

1b. Syria: The emir of Aleppo, Thimal Mu'izz ad-Daulah, negotiated with the Empress Theodora, when she and Zoe ruled together briefly in their own right prior to Zoe's marriage to Constantine IX (June 11). Theodora not only acknowledged Thimal's recent occupation of Aleppo and *abolition of Fatimid rule* (to whom he had been a vassal) but conferred on him the lofty rank of *magistros* and bestowed the title of patrician on his 'masterful' wife, as-Sayyida al-'Alawiyya. —Paul A. Blaum, 'Diplomacy gone to seed: a history of Byzantine foreign relations, A.D. 1047-57', [*International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, Jan. 2005](#); online text 2008.

2. Cyprus: The admiral Constantine Chage led a fleet to Cyprus. The new emperor "did not need much time for the overthrow of [Theophilos \[Erotikos\]](#); for he sent a fleet, overpowered [the rebel Theophilos] Erotikos and easily brought the island [of Cyprus] back to servitude" (PBW under 'Constantine Chage').

3. Italy: (Feb): Exaugustus Boioannes is freed from captivity but is not restored to his command as Catepan.

The Byzantines pay a large ransom to the rebel Lombard leader Atenulf to free Exaugustus Boioannes from captivity. Atenulf embezzles the treasure, abandons the Lombard and Norman rebels and flees into Byzantine territory (where he will die in obscurity). —John Julius Norwich, *The Normans in the South, 1016-1130*, 1967, p.62.

Passing over Arduin, the Norman and Lombard rebels now chose (February 1042) Melus's son Argyrus as their new leader. According to the *Annales Barenses*, Argyros's rebel forces amounted to some **7,000 men**, including those of the Normans William 'Iron-arm', Rainulf of Aversa and Rudolf Trincanocte of Benevento (Jansen et al. p.494; PBW under 1042).

Soon, however, Argyros will defect (August-September 1042) and again become a loyal imperialist. The *Annales Barenses* record that "Argiro" was granted "*patriciatus an cathepanatus vel vestati honoribus*" [invested with the dignity of patrikios and catepan] in 1042 (quoted by the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy: fmg.ac/projects/medlands/sicily.htm).

Breve Chronicon Northmannicum: "*Mense martio Northmanni committunt proelium in Apulia cum Michael Protopatario imperiali, qui vocabatur Dulchianus, et vincunt eum Mense madio iterum ab iis factum est proelium, et iterum victi sunt Graeci, et Protopatarius. – Et in Apulia captae sunt multae civitates, et loca quae, erant Graecorum, et imperatoris Michelis, cui hoc anno successit Costantinus.*" —'In March the Normans make war in Apulia with Michael the imperial *protospatharius* [a high court title] who is called Dokeianos, and defeat him. In May again war is made by them and again the Greeks and the protospatharius are beaten. And *in Apulia many towns* [civitates] *are captured and places that used to belong to the Greeks and to*

the emperor Michael, who in this year Constantine succeeds.'

Argyros and the Normans versus Synodianos and Maniakes

In the wake of the Byzantine defeat by the Normans, Melus's son Argyros seized control of Bari. He soon came to an understanding with the Norman chiefs and, in February 1042, was elected jointly by the Normans and the militia of Bari as "Prince and Duke of [south] Italy" (*Annales Barenses* 55.23-29; Angold 1984: 27): "The people of Bari and Matera, defenceless against the Normans, made treaties with them. The combined forces of Bari and the Normans made Argyros son of Melus their commander, hailing him as princeps and duke of Italy" (PBW, narrative for February 1042).

The Normans thus became the rulers of Melfi and the whole area to the west of Apulia, from the Ofanto valley – the Melfi region – to Matera, NW of Taranto in modern Basilicata, near the latter's border with Puglia/Apulia. (If we draw an equilateral triangle with Bari and Taranto as one of its sides, inland Matera is near the opposite point.)

(Feb-April): Synodianos is appointed by Emperor Michael V as catepan in Apulia. By this time, *all of Apulia save Trani and the very tip below Taranto-Brindisi is in the hands of the rebels.*

Synodianos begins to gather an army with which he plans to retake the 'cities' (towns) that had been lost to the empire in Apulia. William of Apulia says he landed at Otranto, "from where he sent envoys to those cities which had allied with the Franks [Normans], asking them to receive him. They refused to agree to this. He sought to rebuild his army, but many of the soldiers had been killed or fled and he was able to raise *only a few*. Because of this, Synodianus remained within the city walls." In April, prior to beginning a campaign, he was recalled to Constantinople by Empress Zoe following death of Emperor Michael V. *April: Maniakes replaces Synodianos.*

As soon as Georgios Maniakes arrived in S Italy, Argyros, son of Melus, wrote to the Normans at Aversa and Melfi, and they all came (rebel Lombards as well as Normans) to Mottola, some *7,000 in number*. The "terrified", or more likely simply prudent, Maniakes "fled" back at night, or we may say he withdrew his troops, to Taranto, while the Normans made demonstrations outside the town's land gate to provoke him to come out and fight. After a time, the Normans ravaged the area of Oria and (late April) went home (PBW, citing the *Annales Barenses* 55.36-42; Jensen et al. p.494).

4. Empress Zoe sends **Maniakes back to Italy** (April 1042). After taking Taranto and Matera, Maniakes totally defeats (June 1042) Argyros and the Normans, who had begun their attack on southern Italy, in the Battle of Monopoli, SE of Bari. For details, see below under 1042-43.

Maniakes arrived back in Italy with the title of "*magistros* [senior courtier], *catepan* [regional overlord] and *autokrator* [governor-general] of Italy and *strategos* [military commander] of the *tagmata* [regiments] of Italy" (so:

'master, supreme governor, ruler of Italy and general of the regiments of Italy'). At this time Byzantium still controlled only Taranto, Oria, Otranto and Brindisi along with Trani in the north.

He disembarked in the major port-town of Taranto at the end of April 1042 with a new army evidently reinforced with *Arvanitai* or 'Albanian' contingents, i.e. troops from the theme of Dyrrhachium, who (says Rodriguez) were one of the permanent foreign regiments in the imperial army. This may imply that they were ethnically non-Greek. Attaleiates writes of both

Arbaniton/Arvantion and *Albanoi/Alvanoj*. The "Albanoi" serving in Italy with Maniakes may instead be a reference to Normans, i.e. men from Alba (Dimitrios Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates: History as Politics in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, ProQuest, 2006 p. 289). Or the *Arvanitai* may simply be imperial subjects from the Illyrian region of Arvanon (Dyrrhachium/Durres) without regard to their ethnicity; and again the *Alvanoj* are the 'aliens/foreigners' in Italy, i.e. the Normans (Eleni Panourgia, *Fragments of death, fables of identity: an Athenian anthropography*, Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1995 p.26).

When Georgios Maniakes was sent by Zoe to Italy, which had fallen out of Byzantine control, he had few or no battle-worthy army, yet nevertheless managed to drive back the 'Franks' (Normans) to Capua, Benevento and Naples. He attracted many 'Franks' (Normans) to his service, appeased those who had been wronged by Michael Dokeianos, and, being feared for his cruelty and courage, he *established peace in the Italian themes* (PBW, 1042).

Lupus: "*Mense Aprilis descendit Maniachus Magister Tarentum, et mense Iunii Monopolim abiit; ad Civitatem Materam, et fecit ibi grande homicidium*". – 'In April the *magistros* Maniakes arrives at Taranto, and in June departs for Monopoli; (and thence) to the town of Matera where he makes a great slaughter.'

(July): Maniakes' political and personal enemy Romanus Sclerus convinces the new emperor Constantine IX to recall the victorious general to Constantinople. Maniakes knows that the recall will lead to his arrest and probable execution. He decides (*September*) to revolt against Constantine IX and proclaims himself emperor (Oct.). He easily wins the support of the Byzantine and Varangian troops under his command in Italy.

(August): Meanwhile Argyros, son of Melus, went (*August*) by sea to besiege Trani, though the people there had not harmed the people of Bari. He and his rebels had a variety of siege-machines, including an 'enormously tall' wooden tower. However, after 36 days of siege, he received a letter from the emperor Konstantinos IX via the messenger Theodoretos, offeringb him an amnesty and high Byzantine honours, probably the dignity of patrikios. He accepted the bribe, burned his siege-engines and returned to Bari (PBW). That is, he *defected from the side of the rebels*.

(Sept): (1) Pardos is sent to Italy as the new Catepan of Apulia/Italy to replace the rebel George Maniaces. Pardos is supported by Nicholas, Archbishop of Bari, and the protospatharius Tubachi. Pardos and Tubachi are soon arrested at Otranto and executed by order of Maniaces.

(Sept): (2) *Argyros returns to Byzantine service*, when Zoe takes a third husband, a senator in his seventies who becomes the new emperor of Romaniya (Byzantium) with the name of Constantine IX Monomachus. They offer to Argyrus, among other things, the post of commander of the Imperial Armies in Italy.

(Sept): (3) At Matera William 'Iron-Arm' de Hauteville is elected by Normans as their "count" [comes] *after the defection of Argyrus* (Chronicle of Lupus, cited in the notes to Amato's *The history of the Normans*, ed. Prescott N. Dunbar, G. A. Loud, 2004: 66-68).

William and the other leaders, chief among them Drogo and [Peter](#), petitioned [Guaimar IV, Prince of Salerno](#), for recognition of their conquests. They received (see 1043) the lands around Melfi as a [fief](#) and, in return, proclaimed Guaimar "[Duke of Apulia and Calabria](#)".

5. Traditional date that Harald Hardrada - aged 27 in 1042 - leaves Constantinople. Alternatively 1044. He went to Kiev where he married king Yaroslav's daughter Elisif, before returning to Norway.

6. Zoe and Theodora abdicate following Constantine's marriage to Zoe.

1042-43:

As noted earlier, Maniaces crushes the Normans in Langobardia. Having landed at Taranto in [April 1042](#), he campaigned up and down the heel of Italy from Matera* to Otranto and Bari - until [February 1043](#), when he departed from Otranto for the Balkans (map in Rodriguez at www.imperiobizantino.com/italiabizdef: accessed Sept 2004; dead link 2011).

(*) Matera, Bari and Taranto form the points of a nearly equilateral triangle. Taranto is the port and coastal town at the top of the *inside* heel, that is: at the top of the Gulf of Taranto. It is not to be confused with Otranto, on the *outside* or back of the heel opposite Greece.

As soon as Georgios Maniakes arrived in S Italy, Argyros, son of Melus, wrote to the Normans at Aversa and Melfi, and they all came to Mottola, "some [7,000 in number](#)". As noted earlier, the allegedly "terrified" Maniakes "fled" at night back to Taranto, while the Normans made demonstrations outside the town's land gate to provoke him to come out and fight. "After a time, the Normans ravaged the area of Oria [east of Taranto] and went home" (PBW, narrative for 1042).

If a skilled and self-confident general like Maniaces could be daunted or stymied by an army of 7,000 then he himself probably commanded far fewer men, perhaps of the order of 3,500.

In *April* 1042, as we noted, George Maniakes returned from Constantinople with a new army and assaulted Monopoli and (in *June*) Matera. According to the Latin sources, he made a terrible example by having the old and young

alike struck down, *buried alive, hanged and tortured* in many terrible ways.* Within a year the Lombard-Norman cause was virtually lost, but at the last minute Maniakes became a victim of Byzantine politics and was recalled to Constantinople (*July* 1042). The Norman threat, however, was curtailed for a decade: cf 1053.

(*) William of Apulia: "He left his fleet at Otranto, and encouraged his evil army to attack the towns which had made agreements with the Franks. His forces first invaded the Monopoli district. Maniakes had many people executed, having some hanged from trees, and others beheaded. The tyrant dared [even] to commit a hitherto unheard of crime; he buried captured infants alive, leaving only their heads above ground. Many perished like this, and he spared no one. After this Maniakes marched on Matera, . . . Maniakes in his anger murdered 200 peasants who had been captured in the fields there. Neither boy nor old man, monk nor priest, was safe – this wicked man gave mercy to none."

In *September* 1042, Pardos arrived with an army at [Otranto](#) to take over command from Maniakes. Pardos was accompanied by [Nicholas, Archbishop of Bari](#), who, though under the jurisdiction of the [Roman see](#), was apparently a Byzantine loyalist, and by Tubachi, a [protospatharius](#). It is probable that the archbishop had joined the new catepan in a prior landing, during which the Greeks had negotiated with the [Lombard](#) rebel leader [Argyros](#). Subsequently, Argyrus abandoned the Lombard cause for the Greek. Pardos and Tubachi were arrested at Otranto, however, and executed by Maniakes, who was acclaimed (*Oct* 1042) emperor by his troops (Wikipedia 2011).

Many episodes from Maniakes' expedition are illustrated in Skylitzes: see in V. Tsamidakis (ed. 2002), *The illustrated chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*, Leiden.

Skylitzes is the only surviving illustrated manuscript of a Greek chronicle; 574 images depict every aspect of Byzantine life, including boats, sieges, literary practices, dreams, ceremonies and even Siamese twins.

Chronology

From Rodriguez's "Jorge Maniakes", accessed 2009, at www.imperiobizantino.com/jorgemaniakes:

Feb 1042: The Lombard rebels of Bari and the Normans choose Argyrus as their leader (princeps and dux).

April 1042: Maniakes lands at Taranto.

June 1042: attacks Matera.

Sept 1042: Pardos arrives to replace Maniakes. (Or in August): [Argyros is induced to re-defect](#) to the imperialist side. Hauteville replaces him (September, at Matera) as rebel "count" of Italy (or of Melfi: see 1043).

Oct 1042: Maniakes is proclaimed emperor at Otranto. Argyrus takes up the offer to return to leadership of the loyalists.

Feb 1043: Maniakes departs Otranto for Dyrrhachium.

1042-45:

Armenia: The Armenians had refused (1041) to acknowledge that Ani had been bequeathed to Byzantium. Under Gagik, they repulse an imperial expeditionary force (1042).

By the start of the 11th century the population of Ani was very large, up to perhaps 100,000 including 12 bishops, 40 monks and 500 priests, and its renown was such that it was known as "The city of forty gates" and "The city of a thousand and one churches" (Campbell 1967; Redgate 2000: 210).

A Romanic/Imperial army dispatched to capture Ani was *defeated*, or at least strongly opposed, in 1042 by forces led by general Vahram Pahlavuni. Armenian chroniclers speak of Byzantine losses of more than "20,000" men, although 2,000 would be more plausible; significantly, the Byzantine chroniclers are silent about the whole event.

Pro-Romanic Armenians in the town persuaded Gagik to go to Constantinople to sign a peace treaty; on arriving there Gagik was imprisoned.

Subsequently Constantine IX named the *vestes* ['*vestarches*' in Skylitzes: both were honorary court titles*] Michael Iasites as governor (*doux*) of the theme of Iberia and dispatched him (1044) to Ani with troops. Though he strove manfully, Iasites found the going rough in Armenia, so that Constantine saw fit to send in a second and much larger force (spring 1044). This formidable army was led by one of the most prominent of imperial officials, the eunuch Nikolaos, who held the civilian titles of *proedrus* and *parakoimomenus* (grand chamberlain), as well as the military rank of Domestic of the Schools or commander-in-chief of all imperial forces in Anatolia. —Paul Blaum, 'Diplomacy gone to seed: a history of Byzantine foreign relations, A.D. 1047-57', *International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, Jan. 2004.

The Byzantines again attacked Ani (1044), and again they were defeated, but in 1045 the city's population, realising that they were leaderless and surrounded by enemies, resolved to surrender to the Byzantines. Formally it was the katholikos Peter Getadarj who surrendered the city.

(*) The highest titles were (in descending order) magistros, vestarches, vestes, patrikios and protospatharios.

Skylitzes (summarised in PBW at AD 1045:) offers a slightly different account. When Gagik II refused to abide by the agreement to hand over Ani and Armenia to the Byzantines, he was attacked by the forces of Konstantinos IX. Michael Iasites, catepan of Iberia, tried a swift attack, but Gagik organised his defences. Later Nikolaos, *domestikos ton scholon* [commander-in-chief of the army] and *parakoimomenos* [high chamberlain], arrived with superior forces. Nikolaos carried letters from the emperor for the Kurdish ruler of Dvin, 'Aplesphares' [the Kurd *Abul-Aswar* of the Shaddadid dynasty], urging him to attack Gagik's lands. Nikolaos wrote himself too, promising gifts to Abul-Aswar. Attacked by Nikolaos, and with his territory ravaged by Abul-Aswar, Gagik came to an agreement with Nikolaos to hand Ani to the emperor.

1042-57:

Isaac Comnenus (the future emperor) served as commander of the field army in [Anatolia](#).

Debasement of the gold currency

From <http://www.tulane.edu/~august/H303/currency/Isaurian.htm>:

Constantine IX (1042-1055)	90.5%
	89.0%
	87.0%
	81.5%
Theodora (1055- 56)	80.5%
Isaac I (1057-1059)	77.0%
Constantine X (1059-1068)	75.5%

Catepans of Italy: *Georgius Maniaces, a Michael in Apuliam missus, A.C. 1043. ubi et purpuram induit*. 'George Maniakes by Michael sent to Apulia, where he [Maniakes] assumes the purple'. *Pardus Patricius, cum Tubaki, Protospatha descendit, A.C. 1043*. [sic: 1042]. 'The patrician Pardos, with the protospathios Tubachi, arrives AD 1043'. . . . *Constantinus Theodorocanus Proedrus, contra Maniacem in Italiam missus A.C. 1043*. 'Konstantinos Theodorokanos Proedros sent into Italy against Maniakes' . . . [then] *Eustachius Palatinus A.C. 1045*.

"How little oppressive the Greek rule was, and how skillfully the Catepans yielded to the difficult conditions of their Apulian command, is strikingly illustrated by a document of the date 1043 relating to Bari. The Catepan Eustathius wishing to reward the fidelity of the *Judex* Bisantius of that city to the Emperor during the rebellion of Maniakes [see details below] and afterwards against the "Franks" (the Normans), concedes to him the administration of the village of Foliano (or Foliniano) and its surrounding district; he is permitted to plant strangers there as colonists, and may collect tribute from them, himself and his heirs, *without any interference from the imperial authority*. Finally the Catepan concedes to him that his new subjects should be governed by him according to *Lombard* law, except, however, in case of assassination of the Sacred Emperors or the Catepan himself; such a case could only be judged [only] by an imperial official and by imperial law." —Edmund Curtis, 'Robert Guiscard 1015-1085', at <http://www.third-millenniumlibrary.com/readinghall/GalleryofHistory/Robert-Guiscard.htm>; accessed 2011.

1043:

1a. Italy: Argyrus, now assisting Byzantium, is defeated in a battle at Venosa

with the Normans who before were his allies but now consider him a traitor. Before this battle it is said that Hugh Tuboeuf [Ugo Tutabovi, Latin Tudebusis] caused panic among the Greek troops by knocking out the horse of a Greek herald with one punch of his mailed fist (Norwich 1967: 60; Bradbury 2004: 162 places this event in 1041 before a battle against Dokeianos).

Rodriguez: In 1043 Byzantium still controlled Calabria, Taranto and the 'Land of Otranto' (the lower heel), but in Apulia proper only the coastal towns recognised the basileus. In the interior only some isolated fortress-towns such as Troia (until 1048) and Lucera (until 1060) evaded the Norman dominion.

1b. At Melfi in 1043, Guaimar of Salerno notionally divided the region of ex-Byzantine upper Apulia—except for Melfi itself, which was to be ruled on a republican model—into 12 baronies for the benefit of the Norman leaders. William de Hauteville himself received nominal title to [Ascoli](#), [Asclettin](#) Drengot received [Acerenza](#), [Tristan](#) (a Breton) received [Montepeloso](#), [Hugh Tuboeuf](#) [It. *Ugo Tutabovi*] received [Monopoli](#), [Peter](#) received [Trani](#), [Drogo de Hauteville](#) received [Venosa](#), and Ranulf Drengot, now independent, received [Monte Gargano](#) (Wikipedia, 2011, under 'Norman conquest of S Italy').

1c. Italy and the Balkans: As noted, Maniakes turns rebel and crosses from Otranto to Dyrrhachium and thence to Macedonia (Feb 1043).

The Revolt and Death of Maniakes

Pardos the *patrikios* arrived (September 1042) in Italy with two colleagues and a large sum of gold and silver, to replace Maniakes. Pardos came to Otranto with a guaranteed pardon for Georgios Maniakes if he immediately gave up his rebellion. But Maniakes killed Pardos and later his deputy the *protospatharios* "Tubachi". His rival Romanos Skleros took vengeance on Maniakes in the Anatolikon theme, attacking his estates and his wife.

Maniakes went to Bari, but [the town ignored him](#). He then crossed with his troops to Dyrrhachion [Feb 1043] and won a first battle. Later in Macedonia: Battle of Ostrobo, 1043: sudden death of Georgios Maniakes at the moment of victory (PBW, Narrative for 1042-43). _

Meanwhile (arrived Bari February 1043): Basil Theodorokanos, [Italian: Teodoro Cano](#), briefly served as [Byzantine](#) catepan [of Italy](#), succeeding Pardos. He was a *patrikios* and a former companion in arms of [George Maniakes](#), appointed to go to [Apulia](#) and [Calabria](#) and put down the revolt of Maniakes and [bring Italy back to obedience](#). In February [1043](#), Basil landed at [Bari](#).

Basileios Theodorokanos arrived in Italy as catepan to capture Maniakes with the aid of Argyros, now (since August 1042) back in imperial service. They moved on Otranto, Theodorokanos by sea and Argyros by land. But Maniakes had already crossed the Adriatic and was in 'Bulgaria' (i.e. our Albania) (thus PBW).

The [Normans](#) tried to surround [Otranto](#), but the new catepan's fleet blocked them. Maniakes, however, debarked (also in Feb) for [Durazzo](#) with his army. Theodorokanos was later replaced (1046) by [Eustathios Palatinos](#).

The Balkans: Proceeding eastwards along the Via Egnatia towards Thessalonica, Maniakes' army clashes (1043) with an Imperial army under the *sebastophorus* Stephen at *Ostrovo* [Ostrobos: Arnissa near Pella in Macedonia]. The rebels initially defeat the imperial expedition, but Maniakes is himself killed at the moment of victory.

During the rebellion of George Maniakes in 1043, some Varangians and some Norman troops were with the rebel, while at Constantinople Constantine IX possessed (according to Haldon, *Constantinople and Its Hinterland* 1995: online at www.deremilitari.org/resources/articles/haldon2) only the prefect's Watch and some palatine ceremonial units. It might be better to say that those units they were the core around which Constantine managed to assemble a respectable expeditionary army. It seems that there were Varangian units fighting on either side.

Constantine IX, not daring to place a capable general at the head of his troops, fearing an uprising on his part, chose one of his eunuch chamberlains in whom he had every confidence. The *sebastophoros* Stephanus was lucky enough to disperse the army of Maniakes, which was discouraged by the latter's death. Returning to Romania (Byzantium), Stephanus received the honours of a triumph (Cedr. II 548 f.; Attal. 20).

Maniakes' head was dispatched to the capital so that it could be paraded through the streets to prove the outcome of the battle. Victory services were held and the head was attached to the top (the highest terrace) of the Hippodrome (Norwich, 1992: 311).

Constantine then celebrated his triumph over the rebel. The empresses Zoe and Theodora, his wife and sister in law, sat on either side of him, though it was not usual for empresses to be present at triumphal ceremonies: their presence highlighted the fact that, as purple-born princesses, they were the source of Constantine's imperial authority.

The victory parade itself focussed on the city bazaar precinct, i.e. the area between the Forum and the Arch of the *Milion*. The loyalist forces opened the parade. In the triumphal procession through Constantinople, the Varangians, axes on their shoulders, marched ahead of the victorious general, while another contingent marched behind Maniakes' severed head. First came lightly armed troops, moving as an unorganised crowd. Next came the heavy cavalry fully armed but observing strict military order. Behind them came representatives of the rebel's army, with their heads shaved, seated backwards on asses (McCormick p.181, citing Psellos: see next paragraph).

To quote Psellus, *Chronographia*, VI 87: "The procession, worthy of its author [the emperor], was arranged as follows: the light-armed troops [presumably light infantry] were ordered to lead, armed with shields, bows, and spears, but with [p.147] ranks broken, in one conglomerate multitude; behind them were to come the picked knights [heavy cavalry], in full defensive armour, men who inspired fear, not only because of their forbidding appearance, but by their fine military bearing. Next came the rebel army, not marching in ranks, nor in fine uniforms, but seated on asses, faces to the rear, their heads shaven and their necks covered with heaps of shameful refuse. Then followed the pretender's head, borne in triumph a second time, and immediately after it some of his personal belongings; next

came certain men armed with swords, men carrying rods, men brandishing in their right hands the *rhomphaea** - a great host of men preceding the army commander - and, in the rear of them all, the general himself on a magnificent charger, dressed in magnificent robes and accompanied by the whole of the Imperial Guard."

(*) The meaning *at this time* of the word *rhomphaia* is controversial, as a quick Internet search will reveal. Some say it was a spear, others an axe, others again say a scimitar-like sword.

No less than three victory celebrations were held in 1042-44, partly aimed at cementing Constantine's rule. Cf 1043.

2. Last war between Byzantium and the Rus' or Varangian 'Russians'.

Evidently preparations were already underway at the time of Michael's deposition (1042). The Russians sent "400" boats under Prince Vladimir, the son of Yaroslav, perhaps to aid or profit from Maniaces' revolt. *Greek Fire** and a timely storm combined to defeat them in a naval battle fought near the (southern) entrance to the Bosphorus.

(*) An incendiary weapon similar to a modern flame-thrower. The material was based on petroleum, and typically, but not only, it was fired with siphon-pumps. It was used both on warships and on land (see Haldon 2006a).

Greek Fire defeats the Rus' attack on Miklagard, 1043

When Prince Jaroslav of Kiev sent a fleet to attack Constantinople, Emperor Constantine sent those of his Varangian Guards who were from Russia to serve in distant frontier provinces, and put all the Russians in Constantinople under guard. As we will see, the enemy fleet was destroyed by Greek Fire deployed by the Byzantine navy.

As related by Zonaras and others, cited in PBW, some "400" Russian ships (or boats: *monoxyla*, dugout vessels of varying size) under Jaroslav came through the Bosphorus into the Sea of Marmara. Konstantinos IX gathered all the fighting ships and other war vessels, established infantry positions along the nearby coastline, and on a Sunday he sent out his forces.

The naval forces available in the capital were under strength and Constantine collected together just a few "triremes" [galleys], some transport ships and some old ships re-fitted, all equipped with fire-tubes (siphon-pumps). Or so says Psellos. Pryor & Jeffrey are skeptical and propose that the available naval forces were in truth reasonably strong (*Dromon* p.86). The Byzantine vessels were manned with pike-men and stone-throwers (ballistae) as well as **Greek Fire**. Although outnumbered, they crushed the Russian fleet, in part because of a timely storm.

Psellos stood near the emperor as the Rus' lined up their ships, watching from a distance what was going on - from a hill which sloped gently towards the sea.

Jaroslav ranged his boats in a continuous line from one coast to the other, ready to attack or defend, a sight, says Psellos, "which terrified all who saw it".

When much of the day had passed and the 'barbarians' remained quiet and did not break their formation, the emperor ordered Basileios (Basil) Theodorokanos to take *three* of the warships and launch missiles [i.e. from ballistae] against the barbarians, in order to draw them into battle. Theodorokanos advanced into their midst instead, burnt seven enemy boats with Greek fire, and sunk three with their crews. He and his men jumped onto a Russian vessels, captured it, and slew or overpowered its crew, overawed by his courage.

Since the attack was so successful with three warships, the emperor signalled to some of the others to put out. Seeing them approach, the 'barbarians' thought no more of fighting but broke formation, backed water and began to flee. A storm completed the rout.

Psellos: "They [the Byzantines] sailed forward line abreast, moving beautifully, with the pikemen and stone-throwers cheering aloft and the hurlers of Greek fire standing by in good order ready to shoot. At this, several of the Russian vessels left their line and bore down on our ships at full speed. Then, dividing in two, they *circled round each of the triremes* and hemmed them in, while they *tried to hole them below deck with long poles*. Our men, meanwhile, engaged them with stones from above and fought them off with their cutlasses. *Greek fire*, too, was hurled at them, and the Russians, being unable to see now, *threw themselves into the water*, trying to swim back to their comrades, or else, at a loss what to do, gave up all hope of escape."

Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, ix. 521, mentions the 1043 Rus attack on Constantinople in his *al-Kamil*. Like Psellos, he emphasises the importance of Greek fire in the Byzantine victory: "*Ar-Rum* [the Romans, Byzantines] shot fire at the *Rus* ships. The *Rus* did not know how to extinguish the flames, and many of them were burned to death or drowned." Many of the Rus either died from burns sustained by the Greek fire or were drowned when their burning ships sank. The Rus who had departed their boats fought a pitched battle on shore with the Byzantines and were defeated. The Byzantines then cut off the right hands of some of the captured Rus.

It was said that "15,000" enemy corpses [this is at the limit of plausibility: 300 vessels x 50 men = 15,000] were washed up on the shore of the Bosphorus. As we have said, Psellus watched the defeat of the invading boats as he sat with the Emperor looking over the Bosphorus (Obolensky p.294; Davidson p.170). Cf 1045.

Ibn al-Athir says that only those Rus who were taken captive with the son of the Rus "king" were permitted to depart from Constantinople. The Rus "king" (*malik ar-Rusiya*) mentioned here is Yaroslav of Kiev (d. 1054).

The Byzantine fleet remained on-station for two days before returning to the capital.

1043: (a) fl. Ibn Ezra, Spanish-Hebrew poet and scholar of Toledo. Biblical

commentaries and poems. Toledo at this time was one of many petty Muslim principalities ruling in the southern two-thirds of Spain/*al-Andalus*. Cf 1044 (ibn Hazm).

(b) fl. Ibn Hazm, Spanish-Arab writer, briefly chief minister to the emir of Cordoba. Author of a book on chivalrous love, and a critic of Christianity.

(c) Iran: The Seljuk Turks under Toghril conquer the Caspian province of Tabaristan and the Persian city of Rayy (today's Teheran). After negotiating with the Caliph, Toghril declares himself 'protector of the commander of the faithful'. Meanwhile Syria slips from I control.

1045:

The Empire reached its medieval height with the annexation of Ani NW Armenia. The easternmost provinces were: (1) the ducate of Vaspurakan, east of Lake Van, created in 1022; and (2) the Ani/Shirak region - added to the Theme of Iberia in 1045, creating a ducate of "Ani and Iberia" (Holmes 2005: 366; Treadgold 1997: 592). The original theme of Iberia had been first created in AD 1000.

The apogee was brief: the empire lost Ani to a new, expanding power, the Seljuk Turks, in 1064 (Treadgold 1997: 600).

CHRONOLOGY ENDS HERE.



Above: This map is not quite correct. In truth the Theme of Sirmium (west of Belgrade/Singindunum), created in about 1016, was

ephemeral. By 1030 Belgrade was (back) in the hands of a local Slavic zhupan (Holmes 2005: 425-26). Also Naissus (Nish) was part of the Theme of Bulgaria (not that of Sirmium). The Serbs of Duklja ("Dioclea"), Rashka and Zahumlje were "subject-allies" (Gk *hypekoa*) of Byzantium; their zhupans fought in local clashes variously for or against the emperor (Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier* p.129).

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APPENDIX

EQUIPMENT AND DRESS IN MANIAKES'S ARMY, 1038-43

1. A General Dressed for the Field

Raffaele D'Amato (2005) has studied in detail the illustrations in the manuscript known as the Skylitzes Matritensis or 'Madrid Skylitzes' in order to analyse the clothing, equipment and weapons of the army of generalissimo George Maniakes in the period 1038-43. D'Amato interprets the miniatures in the light of narrative records from the era.

To start at the top: Maniakes is shown wearing on his head a *kamelaukion* or military cap of red felt that is lightly puffed up on the back. It fits closely on the head like a helmet. This kind of headgear, known since Antiquity, was worn as a padded protection under one's helmet, in conjunction with the turban. For a description of the Byzantine helmet, see below under "Infantry Officer".

Maniakes' armour was the *klibanion*, a metal lamellar sleeveless waist-length corselet. In lamellar armour the platelets overlap upward, helpful for deflecting infantry sword-slashes. Armour made of downwards-overlapping platelets, often worn by infantry, is called scale. In this period the platelets were rivetted to a leather backing or shirt.

D'Amato takes literally the look of the Skylitzes illustrations and proposes that the metal platelets or lamellae of the corselet were large, like broad bird feathers! This seems most unlikely, judging by how lamellar armour is depicted in other artworks from the period 950-1150, namely as small and rectangular platelets.

The miniatures show, attached to the lower borders of the corselet, small strips or straps called *kremasmata*: "hanging pieces", "starpwork fringes" or 'armour-border tongues', called *kymation* in Antiquity. D'Amato thinks they were made of sewn layers of coarse silk and cotton in the 11th century, perhaps with a metallic element within.

At the waist, but under the *klibanion*, Maniakes wears a metal-strengthened leather belt from which hang long *pteryges* or straps of hardened leather, or perhaps they are a further set of *kremasmata*, padded strips made of felt. This is the material specified in Phokas's 10th century manual *Praecepta Militaria*. The short *kremasmata* attached to the corselet look merely decorative, whereas the long leather straps or *pteryges* attached to the belt extend to the upper thighs and would have offered some

protection against a sword-slash.

On his upper arms our general wears metallic bracelets or upper-arm-guards, probably the *manikia* (Gk: "sleeves") mentioned in the sources: similar to but bigger than those worn by emperor Basil II (d. 1025) in the famous miniature of Marcianus Gr.17. The arm-guards cover the whole of Maniakes' upper arms, i.e. they reach up to the shoulder and the edge of the body armour; but the top half of the arm-guard is not seen because the short sleeve of his cloth tunic or under-shirt extends out from under the body armour. Close inspection of the miniatures, says D'Amato, shows that the bracelet in each case was constructed from lamellae, i.e. about 20 metal platelets placed in two rows and tied with leather thongs.

His legs are unarmoured; there is no real protection at all from thigh to toe—except for that provided by a shield. His soft leather boots reach almost to his knees, but unless padded they would not have afforded much protection. Cavalrymen of course used their shields to guard their bent legs. Unless one was very tall, a shield of 100-110 cm [up to 3 ft 7 in] would cover almost the whole height of a horseman riding crouched with short stirrups, certainly from ankle to shoulder.

In his last battle in the Balkans (1043), where he took part in the hand-to-hand fighting, Maniakes is shown carrying a so-called "three cornered" or **kite-shaped shield**. More exactly, its shape is that of an inverted teardrop. Such shields were about 70 cm [2 ft 4 in] wide at the widest point and about "105.3 cm" [sic: 3.5 feet] high. In the manual called the *Sylloge Tacticorum*, s. 39.1, this type is called 'the cavalry shield': 93.6-117 cm [median 105 cm: 3 ft 5 in] high in that source; also in the *Praecepta Militaria*, IV, 36-37. There were also round shields in use, 90 cm in diameter according to the military manuals but evidently smaller, under 80 cm, in artworks (Dawson, *Cavalryman* p.36).

There were two straps rivetted to the back of the shield, near its top, with which to hold it. One strap went inside the forearm elbow bend and the other was gripped with the hand (D'Amato p.67).

The general is shown wearing his **sword** (Gk *spathion*) strapped on a second outer belt rather than a baldric. But most troops did use the baldric: Greek *váltidion*, Latin *baltidium*. Dawson, *Infantryman* p.19 and D'Amato give the length of the *spathion* (Roman long sword) as about 85 cm; McGeer offers 90 cm.

Finally, D'Amato supplies Maniakes with a 'battle-flail', i.e. a short war-whip apparently about 60 cm [2 ft] long whose several leather thongs carry heavy metal weights at their tip. This may have been the weapon used to humiliate Arduin (in 1040).

Triangular Shields and Long Maces

The illustrations in Skylitzes depicting the Sicilian campaign of 1038-40 show the Byzantine troops carrying triangular, tear-drop or "kite"-shaped shields, while the Muslims have smaller round shields. In the illustration of the battle near Troina, the Byzantines' **long maces** are much in evidence.

In the 9th C, the *bardoukion* was a fighting mace, which could be also thrown. The same can be said for the *matzoukion*, another type of mace. Bardoukia and matzoukia were thrown against the enemy by both

infantrymen and cavalrymen, at certain distances. Emperor Leo, ca AD 907, mentions the cavalry mace, saying that it should have a spiked head. The head featured spiked projections designed to inflict serious wounds. D'Amato, citing Kolias, says that the shaft, normally of wood, had a length between 60 and 80 cm [up to 30 inches] (D'Amato, 'The Mace').



Left: Byzantines. Right: Bulgarians (Skylitzes).

2. An Infantry Officer

The Varangians joined the Romanic ('Greek') army in the late 900s. We summarise here D'Amato's analysis of the dress and equipment of a Varangian officer in 1038.

D'Amato imagines that Varangian officers would have worn much the same equipment as non-Varangian infantry officers, e.g. the waist-length corselet of downward overlapping scales or upward overlapping lamellar. He notes that in the Norse sagas it is said that Harald Sigurdsson, the Varangian commander under Maniakes, wore, down to the calves, long East-Roman armour called *emma*; or at least that was the nickname he gave to this large piece of armour (Nicolle, *Armies of Medieval Russia*, Osprey 1999 p.33; Benedikz 2007: 184). This armour, which protected him down to the calves, should be read as a mail coat, even though made in Byzantium.

The officer's helmet in D'Amato's illustration is conical and made of segments rivetted together with reinforcing bossed plates: the so-called 'segmented *spangenhelm*' type. D'Amato calls it the 'directly rivetted frameless sprangenhelm'. (The one-piece plain flat-conical cap-style helmet was more common in Byzantine armies.) Nape protection was given by a *cuir-bouilli* (boiled or hardened leather) aventail whose strips or strap-tops were sewn to the inner lining of the helmet.

The lamellar cuirass, worn over the mail tunic in the case of officers, was a waist-length scale *klibanion* of Greek-Hellenistic style, i.e. with a slightly muscled-body-shaped base. D'Amato thinks the shape was supplied by the shaped leather backing or interior side of the corselet; the platelets were

rivetted on. He depicts scale armour with 10 rows of quadrangular iron lamellae.

The officer wears leather pteruges as additional protection for his upper arms.

His **sword** or spathion of about "86" cm, nearly three feet, is worn in what emperor Leo VI called 'the Roman fashion', i.e. hung by a baldric (Gk *váltidion*, Lat. *baltidium*) – transverse from the right shoulder –with the top of the sword riding loose on the left hip.

In the 11th Century Varangians used the circular, slightly convex Scandinavian-style **shield**, measuring about 80-100 cm [around 3 ft] in diameter and supported with shoulder straps.

Rather than boots, which Byzantines preferred, D'Amato gives our Varangian officer low shoes and puttees in the form of *wickelbänder* or wool bands, wrapped in herringbone pattern around the lower legs.

3 A Lombard Infantryman

A 'Pelthastis of the Thema of Longobardia or Laghouvardhà'

In this case D'Amato uses for his analysis a miniature called "The Temporal Authorities" of Exultet 2, today preserved in Pisa Cathedral, but produced in Southern Italy, probably at Capua, in 1059.

On his head our infantryman wears a metal, single-piece *kassidion* or very high conical-pointed helm over a mail coif. The latter is in effect a hood.

D'Amato gives him body armour in the form of a waist-length sleeveless scale corselet with 16 rows of non-overlapping square platelets, rivetted to a leather backing. Or perhaps it should be called 'lamellar'. The corselet is worn over a knee-length, long-sleeved tunic that was probably padded for comfort and protection. That is, the corselet stops at the waist; the tunic continues nearly to the knees.

He carries only a long spear of about 8 ft or 2.5 metres and no sword because that is what the source illustration shows; but almost universally (except for temporary conscripts) infantry also carried swords.

The shield was medium-small, about 60 cm [about 2 ft] in diameter, with a circular, very convex shape and without a central boss.

There is no additional leg protection; high soft leather boots reaching nearly to the knees provide the footwear.

Tetx ends.

About the author

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His interest in Byzantium was first sparked in 1976 when he read Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's *A History of Warfare* (Collins 1968) and Charles Oman's *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages* (1898; 2nd ed. 1924).

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